

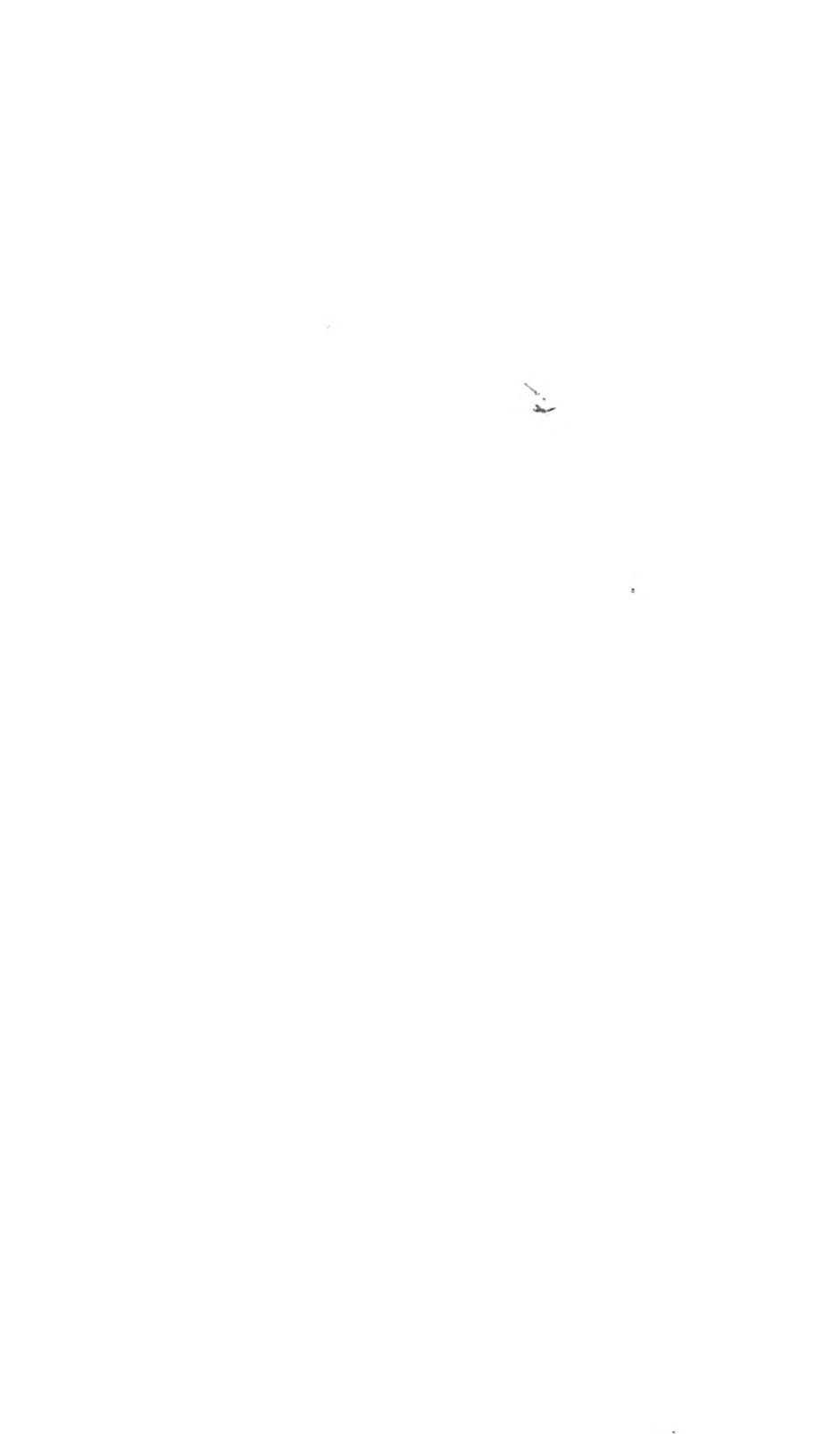
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Miss Beege,
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J. F. Fox
12/4/75



POEMS

SONGS AND SONNETS

BY

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

I write, endite, I point, I raze, I quote,
I interline, I blot, correct, I note,
I make, allege, I imitate, I feign.

Drayton.

For I, that God of Lov's Servantes serve,
Ne dare to love, for mine unlikeliness,
Prayin for spede, al should I therefore sterve,
So ferre am I fro his help in darknesse:
But nathelless, if this may doe gladnesse
To any lovir, and his cause aveile,
Have he the thanke, and mine be the traveile.
Chaucer: Troilus and Cresida.

LEEDS:

JOHN CROSS, COMMERCIAL-STREET.



William Whewell

DEDICATORY SONNET,

TO S. T. COLERIDGE.

Father, and Bard revered ! to whom I owe,
Whate'er it be, my little art of numbers,
Thou, in thy night-watch o'er my cradled slumbers,
Didst meditate the verse that lives to shew,
(And long shall live, when we alike are low)
Thy prayer how ardent, and thy hope how strong.
That I should learn of Nature's self the song,
The lore which none but Nature's pupils know.

The prayer was heard : I "wander'd like a breeze,"
By mountain brooks and solitary meres,
And gather'd there the shapes and phantasies
Which, mixt with passions of my sadder years,
Compose this book. If good therein there be,
That good, my sire, I dedicate to thee.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

PREFACE.

OF the verses contained in this volume, a considerable number have already appeared in various periodicals. The rest are productions, for the most part, of a later time—it may be, of less leisure. None of them, with a single exception, can claim the privilege of juvenile poems. I neither deprecate nor defy the censure of the critics. No man can know, of himself, whether he is, or is not, a poet. The thoughts, the feelings, the images, which are the material of poetry, are accessible to all who seek for them; but the power to express, combine, and modify—to make a truth of thought, to earn a sympathy for feeling, to convey an image to the inward eye, with all its influences and associations, can only approve itself by experiment—and the result of the experiment may not be known for years. Such an experiment I have ventured to try, and I wait the result

with patience. Should it be favourable, the present volume will shortly be followed by another, in which, if no more be accomplished, a higher strain is certainly attempted.

As there is nothing peculiar either in the principles upon which these poems are written, or the circumstances under which they were produced, further preface would be superfluous. Wherever I have been conscious of adopting the thoughts or words of former, especially of living writers, I have scrupulously acknowledged the obligation: but I am well aware that there may be several instances of such adoption which have escaped my observation. It is not always easy to distinguish between recollection and invention. At the same time, be it remembered, that close resemblance of phrase or illustration, or even verbal identity, may arise from casual coincidence, in compositions that owe nothing to each other.

Leeds, January, 1833.

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SONNETS.

SONNET I.

TO A FRIEND.

WHEN we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted :
Our love was nature ; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills :
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That, wisely doating, ask'd not why it doated,
And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.
But now I find, how dear thou wert to me ;
That man is more than half of nature's treasure,
Of that fair Beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure ;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity.

SONNET II.

TO THE SAME.

IN the great city we are met again,
Where many souls there are, that breathe and die,
Scarce knowing more of nature's potency,
Than what they learn from heat, or cold, or rain,
The sad vicissitude of weary pain :—
For busy man is lord of ear and eye,
And what hath nature, but the vast, void sky,
And the throng'd river toiling to the main !
Oh ! say not so, for she shall have her part
In every smile, in every tear that falls,
And she shall hide her in the secret heart,
Where love persuades, and sterner duty calls :
But worse it were than death, or sorrow's smart,
To live without a friend within these walls.

SONNET III.

TO THE SAME.

WE parted on the mountains, as two streams
From one clear spring pursue their several ways :
And thy fleet course hath been through many a maze
In foreign lands, where silvery Padus gleams
To that delicious sky, whose glowing beams
Brighten'd the tresses that old Poets praise ;
Where Petrarch's patient love, and artful lays,
And Ariosto's song of many themes,
Moved the soft air. But I, a lazy brook,
As close pent up within my native dell,
Have crept along from nook to shady nook,
Where flowrets blow, and whispering Naiads dwell.
Yet now we meet, that parted were so wide,
O'er rough and smooth to travel side by side.

SONNET IV.

THE Man, whose lady-love is virgin Truth.
Must woo a lady that is hard to win :
She smiles not on the wild and wordy din
Of all-confiding, all-protesting Youth ;
The Sceptic's apathy ; the garb uncouth,
And Cynic sneer of o'er-experienced Sin,
The Serpent, writhing in its worn-out skin,
Craving again to flesh its sated tooth,
She quite abhors. She is not fond, nor coy—
Self-seeking love, and self-appraising scorn,
She knows not. She hath utterly forsworn,
Her worldly dower of wealth, and pride, and joy—
Her very beauty none but they discover,
Who for herself, not for her beauty, love her.

SONNET V.

WHAT was't awaken'd first the untried ear
Of that sole man who was all human kind ?
Was it the gladsome welcome of the wind,
Stirring the leaves that never yet were sere ?
The four mellifluous streams which flow'd so near,
Their lulling murmers all in one combined ?
The note of bird unnamed ? The startled hind
Bursting the brake—in wonder, not in fear,
Of her new lord ? Or did the holy ground
Send forth mysterious melody to greet
The gracious pressure of immaculate feet ?
Did viewless seraphs rustle all around,
Making sweet music out of air as sweet ?
Or his own voice awake him with its sound ?

SONNET VI.

I LOVED thee once, when every thought of mine
Was hope and joy,—and now I love thee still,
In sorrow and despair :—a hopeless will
From its lone purpose never can decline.
I did not choose thee for my Valentine
By the blind omen of a merry season,—
'Twas not thy smile that brib'd my partial reason,
Tho' never maiden's smile was good as thine :—
Nor did I to thy goodness wed my heart,
Dreaming of soft delights and honied kisses,
Although thou wert complete in every part,
A stainless paradise of holy blisses :
I lov'd thee for the lovely soul thou art,—
Thou canst not change so true a love as this is.

SONNET VII.

Is love a fancy, or a feeling ? No,
It is immortal as immaculate Truth.
'Tis not a blossom, shed as soon as youth
Drops from the stem of life—for it will grow
In barren regions, where no waters flow,
Nor ray of promise cheats the pensive gloom.
A darkling fire, faint hovering o'er a tomb,
That but itself and darkness nought doth shew,
Is my love's being,—yet it cannot die,
Nor will it change, though all be chang'd beside ;
Tho' fairest beauty be no longer fair,
Tho' vows be false, and faith itself deny,
Tho' sharp enjoyment be a suicide,
And hope a spectre in a ruin bare.

SONNET VIII.

WHITHER is gone the wisdom and the power
That ancient sages scatter'd with the notes
Of thought-suggesting lyres ? The music floats
In the void air ; e'en at this breathing hour,
In every cell and every blooming bower
The sweetness of old lays is hovering still :
But the strong soul, the self-constraining will,
The rugged root that bare the winsome flower
Is weak and wither'd. Were we like the Fays
That sweetly nestle in the fox-glove bells,
Or lurk and murmur in the rose-lipp'd shells
Which Neptune to the earth for quit-rent pays,
Then might our pretty modern Philomels
Sustain our spirits with their roundelays.

SONNET IX.

LONG time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I ;
For yet I lived like one not born to die ;
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.
But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep, and waking,
I waked to sleep no more, at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is grey,
For I have lost the race I never ran,
A rathe December blights my lagging May ;
And still I am a child, tho' I be old,
Time is my debtor for my years untold.

SONNET X.

YOUTH, love, and mirth, what are they—but the portion.
Wherewith the Prodigal left his Father's home,
Through foreign lands in search of bliss to roam,
And find each seeming joy a mere abortion,
And every smile, an agonized distortion
Of pale Repentance face, and barren womb !
Youth, love, and mirth ! too quickly they consume
Their passive substance, and their small proportion
Of fleeting life, in memory's backward view,
Still dwindles to a point, a twinkling star,
Long gleaming o'er the onward course of Being ;
That tells us whence we came, and where we are.
And tells us too, how swiftly we are fleeing
From all we were and loved, when life was new.

SONNET XI.

How long I sail'd, and never took a thought
To what port I was bound ! Secure as sleep,
I dwelt upon the bosom of the deep
And perilous sea. And though my ship was fraught
With rare and precious fancies, jewels brought
From fairy-land, no course I cared to keep,
Nor changeful wind nor tide I heeded ought,
But joy'd to feel the merry billows leap,
And watch the sun beams dallying with the waves ;
Or haply dream what realms beneath may lie
Where the clear ocean is an emerald sky,
And mermaids warble in their coral caves,
Yet vainly woo me to their secret home ;
And sweet it were for ever so to roam.

SONNET XII.

ONCE I was young, and fancy was my all,
My love, my joy, my grief, my hope, my fear,
And ever ready as an infant's tear,
Whate'er in Fancy's kingdom might befall,
Some quaint device had Fancy still at call,
With seemly verse to greet the coming cheer ;
Such grief to soothe, such airy hope to rear,
To sing the birth-song, or the funeral,
Of such light love, it was a pleasant task ;
But ill accord the quirks of wayward glee,
That wears affliction for a wanton mask,
With woes that bear not Fancy's livery ;
With Hope that scorns of Fate its fate to ask,
But is itself its own sure destiny.

SONNET XIII.

Too true it is, my time of power was spent
 In idly watering weeds of casual growth,—
 That wasted energy to desperate sloth
 Declined, and fond self-seeking discontent,—
 That the huge debt for all that nature lent
 I sought to cancel,—and was nothing loath
 To deem myself an outlaw, sever'd both
 From duty and from hope,—yea, blindly sent
 Without an errand, where I would to stray :—
 Too true it is, that, knowing now my state,
 I weakly mourn the sin I ought to hate,
 Nor love the law I yet would fain obey :
 But true it is, above all law and fate
 Is Faith, abiding the appointed day.

SONNET XIV.

ON A PICTURE

OF THE CORPSE OF NAPOLEON LYING IN STATE.

Lo ! there he lies. Is Death no more than this ?
 Is this the worst that mighty mortal can
 Inflict upon his fellow ? Could the man—
 The strongest arm of angry Nemesis,—
 The rod that routed hosts were fain to kiss,
 Whom failing Faith afar with terror eyed,
 And Atheism madly deified—
 Could he with all his wars and policies
 Effect but this ? To antedate a year
 That cold unfeeling calm, that even now
 Blanks the dark meaning of that deep-lined brow.
 And from the loose lip half uncurls the sneer ?
 If such be Death, O man, then what art thou.
 That for the fear of Death would'st live in fear !

SONNET XV.

TO WORDSWORTH.

- - - -

THERE have been poets that in verse display
 The elemental forms of human passions :
 Poets have been, to whom the fickle fashions
 And all the wilful humours of the day
 Have furnish'd matter for a polish'd lay :
 And many are the smooth elaborate tribe
 Who, emulous of thee, the shape describe,
 And fain would every shifting hue pourtray
 Of restless Nature. But, thou mighty Seer !
 'Tis thine to celebrate the thoughts that make
 The life of souls, the truths for whose sweet sake
 We to ourselves and to our God are dear.
 Of Nature's inner shrine thou art the priest,
 Where most she works when we perceive her least.

SONNET XVI.

NOVEMBER.

THE mellow year is hasting to its close ;
The little birds have almost sung their last,
Their small notes twitter in the dreary blast—
That shrill-piped harbinger of early snows :
The patient beauty of the scentless rose,
Oft with the Morn's hoar chrystal quaintly glass'd,
Hangs, a pale mourner for the summer past,
And makes a little summer where it grows :
In the chill sunbeam of the faint brief day
The dusky waters shudder as they shine,
The russet leaves obstruct the straggling way
Of oozy brooks, which no deep banks define,
And the gaunt woods, in ragged, scant array,
Wrap their old limbs with sombre ivy twine.

SONNET XVII.

ON PARTING WITH A VERY PRETTY, BUT
 VERY LITTLE LADY.

'Tis ever thus. We only meet on earth
 That we may know how sad it is to part :
 And sad indeed it were, if in the heart,
 There were no store reserved against a dearth,
 No calm Elysium for departed Mirth,
 Haunted by gentle shadows of past Pleasure ;
 Where the sweet folly, the light-footed measure,
 And graver trifles of the shining hearth
 Live in their own dear image. Lady fair,
 Thy presence in our little vale has been
 A visitation of the Fairy Queen,
 Who for brief space reveals her beauty rare,
 And shews her tricky feats to mortal eyes,
 Then fades into her viewless Paradise.

SONNET XVIII.

NIGHT.

THE crackling embers on the hearth are dead :
The indoor note of industry is still ;
The latch is fast ; upon the window sill
The small birds wait not for their daily bread ;
The voiceless flowers—how quietly they shed
Their nightly odours ;—and the household rill.
Murmurs continuous dulcet sounds that fill
The vacant expectation, and the dread
Of listening night. And haply now she sleeps ;
For all the garrulous noises of the air
Are hush'd in peace ; the soft dew silent weeps,
Like hopeless lovers for a maid so fair—
Oh ! that I were the happy dream that creeps
To her soft heart, to find my image there.

SONNET XIX.

THE FIRST BIRTH DAY.

THE Sun, sweet girl, hath run his year-long race
 Through the vast nothing of the eternal sky—
 Since the glad hearing of the first faint cry
 Announc'd a stranger from the unknown place
 Of unborn souls. How blank was then the face,
 How uninform'd the weak light-shunning eye,
 That wept and saw not. Poor mortality
 Begins to mourn before it knows its case,
 Prophetic in its ignorance. But soon
 The hospitalities of earth engage
 The banish'd spirit in its new exile—
 Pass some few changes of the fickle Moon,
 The merry babe has learn'd its Mother's smile,
 Its father's frown, its nurse's mimic rage.

SONNET XX.

WHITHER—Oh—whither, in the wandering air,
Fly the sweet notes that 'twixt the soul and sense
Make blest communion? When and where commence
The self-unfolding sounds, that every where
Expand through silence! seems that never were
A point and instant of that sound's beginning.
A time when it was not as sweet and winning,
As now it melts amid the soft and rare,
And love sick ether! Gone it is—that tone
Hath passed for ever from the middle earth,
Yet not to perish is the music flown—
Ah no—it hastens to a better birth—
Then joy be with it—wheresoe'er it be,
To us it leaves a pleasant memory.

SONNET XXI.

LOVE is but folly,—since the wisest love,
 Itself disclaiming, would invent a use
 For its free motion.—Penitents recluse,
 That scarce allow the natural heart to move,
 With amorous ditties woo the mystic dove,
 Or fondly bid their heavenly spouse unloose
 Their sacred zones.—The politic excuse
 Of worldlings would to worldly ends improve
 The gentle madness.—Courtiers glibly preach
 How Love and Woman best rehearse the play
 That statesmen act.—The grave fine-spoken leech
 Counts how the beatings of the pulse betray
 The sweet disease.—And all the poets teach
 That love alone can build the lofty lay.

SONNET XXII.

YOUTH, thou art fled,—but where are all the charms
Which, tho' with thee they came, and pass'd with thee,
Should leave a perfume and sweet memory
Of what they have been?—All thy boons and harms
Have perish'd quite.—Thy oft renew'd alarms
Forsake the fluttering echo.—Smiles and tears
Die on my cheek, or, petrified with years,
Shew the dull woe which no compassion warms,
The mirth none shares. Yet could a wish, a thought,
Unravel all the complex web of age,—
Could all the characters that Time hath wrought
Be clean effaced from my memorial page
By one short word, the word I would not say,
I thank my God, because my hairs are grey.

SONNET XXIII.

I thank my God because my hairs are grey !
But have grey hairs brought wisdom ? Doth the flight
Of summer birds, departed while the light
Of life is lingering on the middle way,
Predict the harvest nearer by a day ?
Will the rank weeds of hopeless appetite
Droop at the glance and venom of the blight
That made the vermeil bloom, the flush so gay,
Dim and unlovely as a dead worm's shroud ?
Or is my heart, that, wanting hope, has lost
The strength and rudder of resolve, at peace ?
Is it no longer wrathful, vain, and proud ?
Is it a Sabbath, or untimely frost,
That makes the labour of the soul to cease ?

SONNET XXIV.

It must be so,—my infant love must find
In my own breast a cradle and a grave :
Like a rich jewel hid beneath the wave.
Or rebel spirit bound within the rind
Of some old wreathed oak, or fast enshrined
In the cold durance of an echoing cave :—
Yea, better thus than cold disdain to brave :—
Or worse,—to taint the quiet of that mind,
That decks its temple with unearthly grace.
Together must we dwell, my dream and I,—
Unknown must live, and unlamented die,
Rather than soil the lustre of that face,
Or drive that laughing dimple from its place.
Or heave that white breast with a painful sigh.

SONNET XXV.

FROM COUNTRY TO TOWN.

WRITTEN IN LEEDS, JULY, 1832.

I LEFT the land where men with nature dwelling,
Know not how much they love her lovely forms—
Nor heed the history of forgotten storms,
On the blank folds inscribed of drear Helvellyn ;
I sought the town, where toiling, buying, selling—
Getting and spending, poisoning hope and fear,
Make but one season of the live-long year—
Now for the brook from moss-girt fountain welling.
I see the foul stream hot with sleepless trade,
For the slow creeping vapours of the morn,
Black hurrying smoke in opaque mass up-borne,
O'er dinning engines hangs, a stifling shade—
Yet nature lives e'en here, and will not part
From her best home, the lowly-loving heart.

SONNET XXVI.

CONTINUED.

'Tis strange to me, who long have seen no face,
That was not like a book, whose every page
I knew by heart, a kindly common-place—
And faithful record of progressive age—
To wander forth, and view an unknown race;
Of all that I have been, to find no trace,
No footstep of my by-gone pilgrimage.
Thousands I pass, and no one stays his pace
To tell me that the day is fair, or rainy—
Each one his object seeks with anxious chase,
And I have not a common hope with any—
Thus like one drop of oil upon a flood.
In uncommunicating solitude—
Single am I amid the countless many.

SONNET XXVII.

IF I have sinn'd in act, I may repent ;
 If I have err'd in thought, I may disclaim
 My silent error, and yet feel no shame—
 But if my soul, big with an ill intent,
 Guilty in will, by fate be innocent,
 Or being bad, yet murmurs at the curse
 And incapacity of being worse
 That makes my hungry passion still keep Lent
 In keen expectance of a Carnival;
 Where, in all worlds, that round the sun revolve
 And shed their influence on this passive ball.
 Abides a power that can my soul absolve ?
 Could any sin survive, and be forgiven—
 One sinful wish would make a hell of heaven.

SONNET XXVIII.

TO SHAKSPEARE.

THE soul of man is larger than the sky,
 Deeper than ocean—or the abysmal dark
 Of the unfathom'd centre. Like that Ark,
 Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,
 O'er the drown'd hills, the human family,
 And stock reserved of every living kind,
 So, in the compass of the single mind,
 The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie,
 That make all worlds. Great Poet 'twas thy art,
 To know thyself, and in thyself to be
 Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,
 Or the firm, fatal purpose of the heart,
 Can make of Man. Yet thou wert still the same.
 Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.

SONNET XXIX.

WHY should I murmur at my lot forlorn ?
The self-same Fate that doom'd me to be poor
Endues me with a spirit to endure
All, and much more, than is or has been borne
By better men, of want, or worldly scorn.
My soul has faith, my body has the nerve
To brave the penance that my sins deserve.
And yet my helpless state I deeply mourn :
Well could I bear to be deserted quite,—
Less should I blame my fortune were it worse,—
But taking all, it yet hath left me friends,
For whom I needs must mourn the wayward spite
That hides my purpose in an empty purse,
Since what I grateful wish, in wishing ends.

SONNET XXX.

WHAT can a poor man do but love and pray ?
 But if his love be selfish, then his prayer,
 Like noisome vapour melts in vacant air.
 I am a debtor, and I cannot pay.
 The alms which drop upon the public way,—
 The casual tribute of the good and fair,
 With the keen, thriftless avarice of despair
 I seize, and live thereon from day to day,
 Ingrate and purposeless.—And yet not so :
 The mere mendicancy of self contempt
 Has not so far debased me, but I know
 The faith, the hope, the piety, exempt
 From worldly doubt, to which my all I owe.
 Since I have nothing, yet I bless the thought.—
 Best are they paid whose earthly wage is nought.

SONNET XXXI.

WHAT is young Passion but a gusty breeze
Ruffling the surface of a shallow flood !
A vernal motion of the vital blood,
That sweetly gushes from a heart at ease,
As sugared sap in spicy-budding trees !
And tho' a wish be born with every morrow,
And fondest dreams full oft are types of sorrow,
Eyes that can smile may weep just when they please.
But adult Passion, centred far within,
Hid from the moment's venom and its balm,
Works with the fell inherency of sin,
Nor feels the joy of morn, nor evening calm :
For morn nor eve can change that fiery gloom
That glares within the spirit's living tomb.

SONNET XXXII.

FROM PETRARCA.

“Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi.”

LONELY and pensive o'er the lonely strand,
 “With wandering steps and slow,” I loiter on.
 My eyes at watch, to warn me to be gone
 If mark of human foot impress the sand :
 Else would my piteous plight be rudely scann'd,
 And curious folk would stare to see the wan
 And deathlike images of joy foregone,
 And how I inly waste like smouldering brand ;
 Or I would fain believe the tangled wood
 Which girds the small field on the mountain side
 The one sole witness to my crazy mood :
 But ah ! what sandy waste, or forest dim,
 My haunt obscure from love can ever hide !
 Where'er I *think*, I converse hold with *him*.

SONNET XXXIII.

THE vale of Tempe had in vain been fair,
 Green Ida never deem'd the nurse of Jove ;
 Each fabled stream, beneath its covert grove,
 Had idly murmured to the idle air ;
 The shaggy wolf had kept his horrid lair
 In Delphi's cell, and old Trophonius' cave,
 And the wild wailing of the Ionian wave
 Had never blended with the sweet despair
 Of Sappho's death-song : if the sight inspired,
 Saw only what the visual organs shew,
 If heaven-born phantasy no more required,
 Than what within the sphere of sense may grow ;
 The beauty to perceive of earthly things,
 The mounting soul must heavenward prune her wings.

SONNET XXXIV.

TO A LOFTY BEAUTY.

FROM HER POOR KINSMAN.

FAIR maid, had I not heard thy baby cries,
 Nor seen thy girlish, sweet vicissitude,
 Thy mazy motions, striving to elude,
 Yet wooing still a parent's watchful eyes,
 Thy humours, many as the opal's dies,
 And lovely all;—methinks thy scornful mood,
 And bearing high of stately womanhood,—
 Thy brow, where Beauty sits to tyrannize
 O'er humble love, had made me sadly fear thee;
 For never sure was seen a royal bride,
 Whose gentleness gave grace to so much pride—
 My very thoughts would tremble to be near thee;
 But when I see thee at thy father's side,
 Old times unqueen thee, and old loves endear thee.

THOUGHTS AND FANCIES.

A TASK AD LIBITUM.

TO A LADY.

Your bid me write, and yet propose no theme.
 Must I then shoot my shafts of poesy
 At the vast, void, invulnerable air ?
 Or lead my Pegasus a steeple-hunting ?
 Or issue forth with chiming hue and cry,
 With trampling feet of thorough-paced blank verse
 And winding horn of long-drawn melody
 In chace of butterflies ? Or shall I rather,
 In gentler figure, *make believe* to hang
 My careless harp upon a willow tree,
 That every gale may prattle with its strings ?
 'Tis strange that any bard should lack a theme
 In such a world of wonders. Look abroad,
 Around you, and above you, and within you :
 The stars of heaven (as elder sages told)
 Roll on from age to age their lonely way
 To their own music. So the humbler spirit
 Hears in the daily round of household things
 A low sweet melody, inaudible
 To the gross sense of worldlings.—Aye, I grant
 That earth and sky are cunning instruments :

But who may rouse their sleeping harmony,
 And not torment the strings to grinding discord,
 Or vex the hearers with the weary drone
 Of half-forgotten lays, like buzzing night-flies.
 Thwarting the drowsiness themselves produce.
 All, all is stale : the busy ways of men,
 The gorgeous terrors of the steel-clad warrior,
 The lover's sighs, the fair one's cruelty,
 Or that worst state, when love, a rayless fire,
 Is sever'd quite from hope and tenderness,
 Or dogg'd by base suspicion, hurries onward,
 Scared by its own black shadow.—These are themes
 Unmeet for thee, or old, or harsh and strange.
 The gentler joys, the calm sequester'd hours
 Of wedded life : the babble sweet of babes,
 That unknown tongue, which mothers best expound.
 Which works such witchery on a parent's heart,
 Turning grave manhood into childishness,
 Till stoic eyes with foolish rheum o'erflow,
 And fluent statesmen lisp again,—for love
 Will catch the likeness of the thing beloved.—
 These have been sung a thousand times before ;
 And should I sing of thee and thy soft brilliance,
 Thy tender thoughts, in reckless laughter melting,
 Thy beautiful soul, that shapes thine outward form
 To its own image,—thy essential goodness,
 Not thine, but thee,—thy very being's being.
 Thy liquid movements, measured by the notes
 Of thy sweet spirit's music,—the unearthly sound
 Of that beloved voice, less heard than felt,
 That wins the wayward heart to peace, and lulls
 The inmost nature to that blissful sleep

Which is awake to heaven, and brings no dream,
 But foretaste of the best reality :
 Then must I modulate empyreal ether
 To strains more sweet than mortal sense could bear.

SONG.

THE earliest wish I ever knew
 Was woman's kind regard to win ;
 I felt it long e'er passion grew,
 E'er such a wish could be a sin.

And still it lasts ;—the yearning ache
 No cure has found, no comfort known :
 If she did love, 'twas for my sake,
 She could not love me for her own.

STANZAS.

She was a queen of noble Nature's crowning,
A smile of her's was like an act of grace ;
She had no winsome looks, no pretty frowning.
Like daily beauties of the vulgar race :
But if she smiled, a light was on her face,
A clear, cool kindliness, a lunar beam
Of peaceful radiance, silvering o'er the stream
Of human thought with unabiding glory ;
Not quite a waking truth, not quite a dream,
A visitation, bright and transitory.

But she is changed,—hath felt the touch of sorrow,
No love hath she, no understanding friend ;
Oh grief! when heaven is forced of earth to borrow,
What the poor niggard earth has not to lend ;
But when the stalk is snapt, the rose must bend.
The tallest flower that skyward rears its head,
Grows from the common ground, and there must shed
Its delicate petals. Cruel fate, too surely,
That they should find so base a bridal bed,
Who lived in virgin pride, so sweet and purely.

She had a brother, and a tender father,
 And she was lov'd, but not as others are
 From whom we ask return of love,—but rather
 As one might love a dream ; a phantom-fair
 Of something exquisitely strange and rare,
 Which all were glad to look on, men and maids.
 Yet no one claim'd—as oft, in dewy glades
 The peering primrose, like a sudden gladness,
 Gleams on the soul—yet unregarded fades—
 The joy is ours, but all its own the sadness.

'Tis vain to say—her worst of grief is only
 The common lot, which all the world have known,
 To her 'tis more, because her heart is lonely,
 And yet she hath no strength to stand alone,—
 Once she had playmates, fancies of her own,
 And she did love them. They are past away
 As Fairies vanish at the break of day—
 And like a spectre of an age departed,
 Or unsphered Angel woefully astray—
 She glides along—the solitary hearted.

“ And the rathe primrose that forsaken dies.”

LYCIDAS.

A BROTHER'S LOVE TO HIS SISTER.

FULL ill, I ween, can measured speech reveal
 Or thought embody, what true bosoms feel.
 For hollow falsehood long has set her sign
 On each soft phrase that speaks a love like mine :
 The choicest terms are now enfeoff'd to folly,
 To vain delight, or wilful melancholy.

Oh ! for a virgin speech, a strain untainted
 By worldly use, with holy meaning sainted,
 Thoughts to conceive, and words devote to tell
 The strength divine of love, its secret spell,
 Of brother's love, that is within the heart
 A spiritual essence, and exists apart
 From passion, vain opinion, hopes and fears,
 And every pregnant cause of smiles and tears.
 A life that owes no fealty to the will,
 Nor takes infection of connateral ill—
 That feels no hunger and admits no doubt,
 Nor asks for succour of the world without,
 But is, itself, its own perfected end,
 The one sole point to which its workings tend.

A love like this so pure of earthly leaven,
 That hath no likeness in the earth or heaven,

No correspondent in the world of sight,
 No symbol in the total Infinite
 Was ne'er engendered in the soul or eye }
 From ought conceived of form or quality, }
 He loves not right that asks, or answers why, }
 It is not born of weakness, common needs,
 Or gainful traffic in convenient deeds :
 The joy, the good, that name and being owe
 To sin and pain, it can and will forego ;
 For moral good is but the thrall of time,
 That marks the bourne of virtue, and of crime.
 A joy it hath that underived of pain,
 Its proper nature, shall for aye retain :
 A good it is that cannot cease or change
 With man's desire, or wild opinion's range :
 A law it is, above all human state
 A perfect freedom, and an absolute fate.

“ OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

IN stature perfect, and with every gift
Which God would on his favourite work bestow,
Did our great Parent his pure form uplift,
And sprang from earth, the Lord of all below.

But Adam fell before a child was born,
And want and weakness with his fall began—
So his first offspring was a thing forlorn—
In human shape, without the strength of man—

So, heaven has doom'd that all of Adam's race,
Naked and helpless, shall their course begin
E'en at their birth confess their need of grace—
And weeping, wail the penalty of sin.

Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest,
Since God himself a baby deign'd to be—
And slept upon a mortal mother's breast.
And steep'd in baby tears—his Deity.

O—sleep—sweet infant—for we all must sleep—
And wake like babes, that we may wake with him.
Who watches still his own from harm to keep.
And o'er them spreads the wing of cherubim.

WRITTEN ON THE FIRST OF NOVEMBER.
1820.

HAIL, dark November ! spurious progeny
Of Phœbus and old Night,—thou sable mourner.
That lead'st the funeral pageant of the year,—
Thou Winter's herald, sent before thy lord
To bid the earth prepare for his dread presence.—
I gladly wish thee welcome, for thou wear'st
No flaunting smile to mock pale Melancholy.
Which ever loves its likeness, and derives
From most discomfort, truest consolation.

The world is heartsick, and o'erwearied Nature
Bears, in her lost abandonment, the mark
Of ills expected, and of pleasures past,
And, like a late-repenting prodigal,
Deals out with thrift enforced the scant remains
Of lavish'd wealth, sighing to think upon
The riotous days, that left no joy unrifled,
No store reserved, to comfort poor old age :
The tip-toe levity of spring, flower-deck'd,
And Summer's pride, and Autumn's hospitality
Have eat up all.

And now her festal robes
Are worn to rags,—poor rents of tatter'd state,

Telling a tale of mad, luxurious waste,
 Yet not enough to cover nakedness,—
 A garb of many hues, and wretched all.
 There is a desperate patience in her look,
 And straggling smiles, or rather ghosts of smiles,
 Display the sadness of her wrinkled visage.
 Anon, with gusty rage, she casts away
 Her motley weeds, and tears her thin grey locks.
 And treads her squalid splendour in the mire ;
 Then weeps amain to think what she has done.
 Doom'd to cold penance in a sheet of snow.

EPIGRAM.

THEY say Despair has power to kill
 With her bleak frown ; but I say No :
 If life did hang upon her will,
 Then Hope had perish'd long ago :
 Yet still the twain keep up their “ barful strife,”
 For Hope Love’s leman is, Despair his wife.

'Tis silly, sooth,
 And dallies with the innocence of love
 Like the old age,—

IN THE MANNER OF A CHILD OF SEVEN
 YEARS OLD.

Ah ! woe betide my bonny bride,
 For war is in the land,
 And far and wide the foemen ride
 With ruthless bloody brand.

Still as a dream the purple beam
 Of eve is on the river,
 But ghastly bright, at the dead of night,
 A blood-red flame will quiver.

Fair in the skies the sun will rise
 As ever sun was seen,
 But never again our window pane
 Shall back reflect his sheen :

For the warrior stern our cot will burn,
 And trample on the bower ;
 It grew for years of smiles and tears,
 'Twill perish in an hour.

Those firs were old, our grandsires told,
 In their good fathers' days,
 And my soul it grieves that their needle leaves
 Must crackle in the blaze.

Beneath their shade how oft we played !
 There was our place of wooing :—
 But now we're wed, and peace is fled,
 And we shall see their ruin.

In battle plain shall I be slain,
 And never would I shrink,
 Oh ! were that all, what may befall
 To thee, I dare not think.

And our sweet boy, our baby joy,
 He'll for his mother cry,
 Till the hot smoke, his voice shall choke,
 And then my bird will die.

Green are the graves, and thick as waves.
 Within our holy ground—
 And here, and there, an hillock fair,
 An infant's grave is found.

Our fathers died, their whole fireside
 Is laid in peace together,
 But vile as stones, our bleaching bones
 Must brave the wind and weather.

Nay, love, let's fly, to the hill so high,
Where eagles build their nest,
Among the heather we'll couch together,
As blithely as the best.

We'll leave the bower and tender flower
That we have nursed with care ;
But the wild blue bell shall bloom as well
Beside our craggy lair.

We shall not die, for all birds that fly
Shall thither bring us food,
And come the worst, we'll be help'd the first,
Before the eagle's brood.

The mist beneath, that curls its wreath
Around the hill-top hoar,
There will we hide, my bonny bride,
And ne'er be heard of more.

SENSE, IF YOU CAN FIND IT.

LIKE one pale, flitting, lonely gleam
 Of sunshine on a winter's day,
 There came a thought upon my dream,
 I know not whence, but fondly deem
 It came from far away.

Those sweet, sweet snatches of delight
 That visit our bedarken'd clay
 Like passage birds, with hasty flight,
 It cannot be they perish quite,
 Although they pass away.

They come and go, and come again ;
 They're ours, whatever time they stay :
 Think not, my heart, they come in vain,
 If one brief while they soothe thy pain
 Before they pass away.

But whither go they ? No one knows
 Their home,—but yet they seem to say,
 That far beyond this gulf of woes
 There is a region of repose
 For them that pass away.

TO SOMEBODY.

And the imperial votaress passed on
 In maiden meditation fancy free,—SHAKSPEARE.

I BLAME not her, because my soul
 Is not like her's,—a treasure
 Of self-sufficing good,—a whole
 Complete in every measure.

I charge her not with cruel pride,
 With self-admired disdain ;
 Too happy she, or to deride,
 Or to perceive my pain.

I blame her not—she cannot know
 What she did never prove :
 Her streams of sweetness purely flow
 Unblended yet with love.

No fault hath she, that I desire
 What she cannot conceive ;
 For she is made of bliss entire,
 And I was born to grieve.

And though she hath a thousand wiles,
 And, in a moment's space,
 As fast as light, a thousand smiles
 Come showering from her face,—

Those winsome smiles, those sunny looks.

Her heart securely deems,
Cold as the flashing of the brooks
In the cold moonlight beams.

Her sweet affections, free as wind,
Nor fear, nor craving feel ;
No secret hollow hath her mind
For passion to reveal.

Her being's law is gentle bliss,
Her purpose, and her duty ;
And quiet joy her loveliness,
And gay delight her beauty.

Then let her walk in mirthful pride,
Dispensing joy and sadness,
By her light spirit fortified
In panoply of gladness.

The joy she gives shall still be her's,
The sorrow shall be mine ;
Such debt the earthly heart incurs
That pants for the divine.

But better 'tis to love, I ween,
And die of slow despair,
Than die, and never to have seen
A maid so lovely fair.

SONG.

'Tis sweet to hear the merry lark,
That bids a blithe good-morrow ;
But sweeter to hark in the twinkling dark.
To the soothing song of sorrow.
Oh nightingale ! What doth she ail ?
And is she sad or jolly ?
For ne'er on earth, was sound of mirth
So like to melancholy.

The merry lark, he soars on high,
No worldly thought o'ertakes him ;
He sings aloud to the clear blue sky,
And the daylight that awakes him.
As sweet a lay, as loud, as gay,
The nightingale is trilling ;
With feeling bliss, no less than his,
Her little heart is thrilling.

Yet ever and anon, a sigh,
Peers through her lavish mirth ;
For the lark's bold song is of the sky,
And hers is of the earth.
By night and day, she tunes her lay,
To drive away all sorrow ;
For bliss, alas ! to night must pass,
And woe may come tomorrow.

NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

WHILE the bald trees stretch forth their long lank arms,
 And starving birds peck nigh the reeky farms :
 While houseless cattle paw the yellow field,
 Or coughing shiver in the pervious bield,
 And nought more gladsome in the hedge is seen,
 Than the dark holly's grimly glistening green—
 At such a time, the ancient year goes by
 To join its parents in eternity—
 At such a time the merry year is born,
 Like the bright berry from the naked thorn.

The bells ring out ; the hoary steeple rocks—
 Hark ! the long story of a score of clocks ;
 For, once a year, the village clocks agree,
 E'en clocks unite to sound the hour of glee—
 And every cottage has a light awake,
 Unusual stars long flicker o'er the lake.
 The moon on high, if any moon be there,
 May peep, or wink, no mortal now will care,
 For 'tis the season, when the nights are long,
 There's time, e'er morn, for each to sing his song.

The year departs, a blessing on its head,
 We mourn not for it, for it is not dead :
 Dead ! What is that ? A word to joy unknown,
 Which love abhors, and faith will never own.

A word, whose meaning sense could never find,
 That has no truth in matter, nor in mind.
 The passing breezes gone as soon as felt,
 The flakes of snow that in the soft air melt,
 The wave that whitening curls its frothy crest,
 And falls to sleep upon its mother's breast.
 The smile that sinks into a maiden's eye,
 They come, they go, they change, they do not die.
 So the Old Year—that fond and formal name,
 Is with us yet, another and the same.

And are the thoughts, that ever more are fleeing,
 The moments that make up our being's being,
 The silent workings of unconscious love,
 Or the dull hate which clings and will not move,
 In the dark caverns of the gloomy heart,
 The fancies wild and horrible, which start
 Like loathsome reptiles from their cranking holes,
 From foul, neglected corners of our souls,
 Are these less vital than the wave or wind.
 Or snow that melts and leaves no trace behind?
 Oh! let them perish all, or pass away,
 And let our spirits feel a New-Year's day.

A New-Year's day—'tis but a term of art,
 An arbitrary line upon the chart
 Of Time's unbounded sea—fond fancy's creature,
 To reason alien, and unknown to nature.
 Nay—'tis a joyful day, a day of hope!
 Bound, merry dancer, like an Antelope;
 And as that lovely creature, far from man,
 Gleams through the spicy groves of Hindostan,

Flash through the labyrinth of the mazy dance,
With foot as nimble, and as keen a glance—

And we, whom many New-Year's days have told
The sober truth, that we are growing old—
For this one night—aye—and for many more,
Will be as jocund as we were of yore,
Kind hearts can make December blithe as May,
And in each morrow find a New-Year's day.

ON A YOUNG MAN DYING ON THE EVE OF MARRIAGE.

WITH contrite tears, and agony of Prayer,
God we besought, thy virtuous youth to spare,
And thought, Oh! be the human thought forgiven,
Thou wert too good to die, too young for heaven—
Yet sure the prayers of love had not been vain,
If death to thee were not exceeding gain.

Tho' for ourselves, and not for thee we mourn,
The weakness of our hearts thou wilt not scorn;
And if thy Saviour's, and thy Father's will,
Such angel love permit, wilt love us still,
For Death, which every tie of earth unbinds,
Can ne'er dissolve the "marriage of pure minds."

TO THE NAUTILUS.

WHERE Ausonian summers glowing,
 Warm the deep to life and joyance,
 And gentle zephyrs nimbly blowing ;
 Wanton with the waves that flowing
 By many a land of ancient glory,
 And many an isle renown'd in story,
 Leap along with gladsome buoyance,
 There Marinere,
 Do'st thou appear,
 In faery pinnace gayly flashing,
 Through the white foam proudly dashing,
 The joyous play-mate of the buxom breeze,
 The fearless fondling of the mighty seas.

Thou the light sail boldly spreadest,
 O'er the furrow'd waters gliding,
 Thou nor wreck, nor foeman dreadest,
 Thou nor helm nor compass needest,
 While the sun is bright above thee,
 While the bounding surges love thee,
 In their deepening bosoms hiding,
 Thou canst not fear,
 Small Marinere,
 For though the tides with restless motion,
 Bear thee to the desert ocean,
 Far as the ocean stretches to the sky,
 'Tis all thine own, 'tis all thy empery.

Lame is art, and her endeavour,
 Follows nature's course but slowly,
 Guessing, toiling, seeking ever,
 Still improving, perfect never;
 Little Nautilus, thou shewest
 Deeper wisdom than thou knowest,
 Lore, which man should study lowly :
 Bold faith and cheer,
 Small Marinere,
 Are thine within thy pearly dwelling,—
 Thine, a law of life compelling,
 Obedience, perfect, simple, glad, and free,
 To the great will that animates the sea.

SWEET Love, the shadow of thy parting wings,
 Hangs on my soul, like the soft shade of even.
 Farewell to thee, for thou art going to Heaven.
 And I must stay behind, with all the things
 Which thou, and thy benign administerings
 Once made most sweet, of sweetness now bereaven :
 Whose memory, as a sour fermenting leaven,
 Perverts all nature with an ill that springs
 From good corrupted. Oh ! for mercy—Love,
 Stay with me yet, altho' thy comrade fair.
 The smiler Hope, be gone to realms above,
 Stay with thy youngest sister, meek Despair—
 For meek she is in truth, as brooding dove,
 If thou with her the lowly bosom share.

SONG.

SAY—what is worse than blank despair,
 'Tis that sick hope too weak for flying,
 That plays at fast and loose with care,
 And wastes a weary life in dying.

Though promise be a welcome guest,
 Yet may it be too late a comer,
 'Tis but a cuckoo voice at best,
 The joy of spring, scarce heard in summer.

Then now consent, this very hour,
 Let the kind word of peace be spoken ;
 Like dew upon a withered flower,
 Is comfort to the heart that's broken.

The heart, whose will is from above,
 Shall yet its mortal taint discover,
 For Time, that cannot alter love,
 Has power to slay the wretched lover.

SONG.

SHE is not fair to outward view
 As many maidens be,
 Her loveliness I never knew
 Until she smil'd on me ;
 Oh ! then I saw, her eye was bright,
 A well of love, a spring of light.

But now her looks are coy and cold,
 To mine they ne'er reply,
 And yet I cease not to behold,
 The love-light in her eye :
 Her very frowns are fairer far,
 Than smiles of other maidens are.

 EPITAPH

ON A MOTHER AND THREE INFANTS.

FROM God they came, to God they went again,
 No sin they knew, and knew but little pain,
 And here they lie, by their fond mother's side,
 Who lived to love and lose them, then she died.

LEONARD AND SUSAN.

THEY were a gentle pair, whose love began
 They knew not when—they knew not of a time
 When they loved not. In the mere sentient life
 Of unremember'd infancy, whose speech,
 Like secret love's, is only smiles and tears,
 The baby Leonard clapp'd his little hands,
 Leapt in his nurse's arms, and crow'd aloud
 When Susan was in sight, and utter'd sounds
 Most strange and strangely sweet, that nothing meant
 But merely joy, as in the green-wood tree
 The merry merle awakes his thrilling song,
 Soon as the cool breath of the vernal dawn
 Stirs the light leaflets on the motionless boughs.
 Mute as the shadow of a passing bird
 On glassy lake, the gentle Susan lay,
 Hush'd in her meek delight. A dimpled smile
 Curl'd round her tiny, rosy mouth, and seem'd
 To sink, as light, into her soft full eyes—
 A quiet smile, that told of happiness
 Her infant soul investing, as the bud
 Infolds the petals of the nascent rose.

Born in one week, and in one font baptized,
 On the same festal day—they grew together,

And their first tottering steps were hand in hand,
 While the two fathers, in half-earnest sport,
 Betroth'd them to each other. Then 'twas sweet
 For mother's ears, to hear them lisp and try
 At the same words, each imitating each ;
 But Leonard was the babe of nimbler tongue,
 And ' Sister Susan' was the first plain phrase
 His utterance master'd—by that dear kind name
 He call'd the maid, supplying so a place
 Which Nature had left void. An only child
 Of a proud mother and a high-born sire,
 Full soon he learn'd to mount a palfrey small,
 Of that dwarf race that prance unclaim'd and free
 O'er the bleak pastures of the Shetland Isles.
 And who may tell his glory or his pride
 When Susan, by her mother's arms upheld,
 Sat, glad though fearful, on the courser's rear,
 While he, exulting in his dauntless skill,
 Rein'd its short testy neck, and froward mouth,
 Taming its wilful movement to the pace
 That palfrey suits of wandering lady fair.
 Bold were his looks, his speech was bold and shrill,
 His smooth round cheeks glow'd with a ruddy brown,
 And dark the curls that cluster'd o'er his head,
 Knotty and close. In every pliant limb
 A noble boy's ambitious manliness
 Elastic sprung. Yet child more loving, fond,
 Ne'er sought the refuge of a parent's side.
 But Susan was not one of many words,
 Nor loud of laughter ; and she moved as soft
 As modest Nymphs, in work of artist rare,
 Seem moving ever. In her delicate eye

And damask cheek there dwelt a grace retired,
 A prophecy of pensive womanhood.
 And yet, in sooth, she was a happy child ;
 And, though the single treasure of her house,
 She neither miss'd a brother's love, nor lack'd
 The blest emotions of a sister's soul.
 She thought no sister loved a brother more
 Than she her brother Leonard—him who show'd
 The strawberry lurking in the mossy shade,
 The nest, in leafy thicket dark embower'd,
 The squirrel's airy bound. No bliss he knew,
 No toy had he—no pretty property—
 No dog—no bird—no fit of childish wrath,
 That was not hers. The wild and terrible tales
 His garrulous old nurse o'ernight had told,
 He duly in the morning told to her,
 With comments manifold ; and when seven years
 Made him a student of learn'd Lilly's page,
 With simple, earnest, kindly vanity,
 He fill'd her wondering ear with all his lore
 Of tense, and conjugation, noun, and verb ;
 Searching the word-book for all pretty names,
 All dainty, doating, dear diminutives
 Which the old Romans used to woo withal.

So pass'd those happy seasons, when no law
 Of jealous custom, no suspected harm
 Bids fresh virginity beware of man ;
 And, like two sexless bees, from flower to flower,
 They wander'd unreprieved. But soon an age
 Of fearful wishes found the spotless pair,
 And Susan felt, unprompted, that the name

Of sister was not hers by right of kind.
 Reserv'd she grew, and though she thought no ill,
 She sigh'd in fear, and strove to frame her speech
 To formal phrase of maiden courtesy.
 Sore wonder'd Leonard at her mien constrain'd,
 Her flitting blush, her intermitted words,
 That seem'd unwelcome strangers to her lips,
 And to her thought unknown. Why thus withdrawn
 Her trembling hand, that wont in his to lie,
 Still as the brooding warbler in her nest,
 Close as the soft leaves of the rose unblown ?—
 Why shrinks she from his kiss, his watchful gaze,
 With such a faint and half-reproachful smile—
 Nor longer may permit her flowing hair
 To seek the pillow of his breast ? Ah ! why
 Is he no more her brother ? But, ere long,
 New passion budding in his vernal soul,
 Fill'd him with joy to think no kindred tie,
 No common blood forbade the current free
 Of his warm wistful sighs.

The tale is old
 Of “passionate first love” with all its dreams
 Sleeping and waking—all its cherish'd pains,
 Uneasy raptures, quarrels, fantasies,
 Quaint wiles, and riddles read by lovers' eyes,
 And bland deceptions meant not to deceive.
 Though wooing well might seem a useless toil,
 When Love, a goodly plant, in cradle sown,
 Shot forth its leaves spontaneous to the warmth
 Of genial youth, yet Leonard duly paid
 The appointed duty of an amorous swain,

“ With adorations and with fertile tears,”
 And “ loyal cantos of contemned love,”
 As if in truth his Susan were a dame
 Haughty and fierce, as Lady of Romance,
 That must be woo’d with blows, and won with scars
 And homicide. Sometimes a shepherd he,
 And soft and silly as his fancied flock :
 Anon an arm’d and errant Paladin,
 He talk’d of forests dark, and deserts drear,
 And foes defied, and giants huge o’erthrown,—
 And all for Susan’s sake. Young love is still,
 Like Eastern sages, parabolical ;
 And bliss, unearn’d, scarce knows itself to be,
 But by the contrast of imagined woe.
 What more of patient suit and coy delay,
 Or passion paid, or maiden pride required,
 I pause not to relate ; nor how, at last,
 The seemly ceremonial courtship done,
 With interchange of braided locks and rings,
 And holy kiss, they seal’d their plighted troth,
 In their glad parents’ sight. Unskill’d am I
 Such scenes to paint—to me, alas ! unknown.
 Unmeet historian of a golden time,
 I cannot give the charm of life renew’d
 To pleasures long forgot ; for happy days,
 Unvaried save by sun, or sunny shower,
 Are bare of incident as dreamless sleep,
 Or sweet existence of a flower unseen.
 Suffice to say, that Leonard and his maid
 Grew up to man’s estate and womanhood.
 Their pure affection, ripening with their years,
 Like a bright angel’s broad o’ershadowing wings,

Guarded their spirits, kept their inmost thoughts
 All lovely, pure, and beautiful. Secure
 In the assurance of an authorized pledge,
 They, unrepining, brook'd their bliss deferr'd
 By charge parental, till maturer years
 Should fit them for the cares of wedded life.

Alas! too wisely spake the poet wise—
 “The course of true love never did run smooth,”
 How clear soe'er the stream. Though like estate,
 Congenial birth, affection tried and true,
 Taste, tempers, studies, finely harmonized
 By sympathy in dissimilitude—
 Divided excellence, that sought and found
 Its full perfection in the bond of love,
 Decreed the union of the happy pair,
 Whose mutual passion was obedience
 To those beloved parents, who had wish'd
 Their offspring blended in a common stock
 Ere either babe was born; yet eyeless Fate
 And human baseness wrought the righteous will
 Of fate-controlling Heaven. The lovely maid
 Was doom'd on earth to droop, a virgin flower,
 Unsoil'd of earth, to bloom in Paradise.

Accursed faction poisons e'en the fount
 Of household amity. A man there came
 Of dubious honour, and of race unknown,
 Deep laden with the plunder'd wealth of Ind;
 And he, forsooth, must shine a rising star
 In Britain's senate, make and unmake laws
 He learn'd but late to keep; beat down prerogative,

“ And make bold power look pale”—a patriot he,
 Profound economist, the people’s friend,
 And champion of reform. Now Leonard’s sire
 Was one of ancient lineage, and estate
 For many generations handed down,
 Without an acre added or impair’d—
 He counted a long line of senators
 Among his ancestry, and ill could brook
 The lineal honours of his house usurp’d
 By the ill-gotten purse of yesterday.
 And now the day of license was at hand,
 Britain’s septennial Saturnalia,
 When the soft palm of nice nobility,
 Ungloved, solicits the Herculean gripe
 Of hands with bestial slaughter newly stain’d ;
 When ladies stoop their coroneted brows,
 And patriotic kisses deal to churls
 A gipsy would refuse ; and, reeling ripe,
 Big Independence, reeking as he goes
 Through the rank toll-booth, works his burly way
 To hiccup perjury.—O Mountain Nymph !
 —O Virgin Liberty ! behold thy shrine,
 And send a snow-blast from thy native hills,
 Or thy fat offerings will all dissolve
 And choke the world with incense.—Plutus now,
 And roaring Bacchus, are thy ministers,
 While swoln Corruption, like a toad, half-hid
 Beneath the purple trappings of the throne,
 Distends her bloated features with a laugh,
 To hear the many take thy name in vain.

Unequal strife had Leonard’s sire to wage—

Too proud to flatter, and too proud to yield
 The palm to flatterers, he fondly deem'd
 Hereditary gratitude—the name
 Of his time-honour'd house—and all the links
 That bind the present to the past, and make
 Each moment sponsor for eternity,
 Were barriers potent to resist the flood
 Of pauper treason, back'd with traitorous gold.
 Hark!—the loud war proclaim'd by drum and fife.
 And labell'd banners, that affront the sky
 With gaudy blazonry of factious hate,
 Turning the innocent hues of flower and field
 To party shibboleths. The clear blue sky
 Frown'd on the crimson of the regal rose—
 Nor spared the maiden blush. Fierce riot rung
 In homely mansions, long devote to peace,
 And mild, benignant mirth. From vale to vale
 The uproar echoed through the spacious shire,
 The clang o'erpowering of the madd'ning wheels
 That glow'd incessant in the whirling fog
 Of sleepy dust that courts the ground in vain.
 The Sabbath bells alarm the slumbering dead
 With irreligious peals; old Silence flies
 From all her hallow'd haunts, and hides her head
 In the brute dumbness of o'ergorged excess :—
 Talk not of Hecatombs, imperial feasts,
 Or antique feats of Roman gluttony;
 For every alehouse is a temple now,
 And flocks and herds but half suffice to stay
 The popular maw.—Not sapient Egypt's god,
 The lowing Apis, had escaped the knife,
 Had slavish Egypt ever claim'd the right

Of unbought suffrage and election free,
 Who dare deny—that beast, and fish, and fowl
 Were made for man? Calves, sheep, and oxen, slain
 In freedom's cause, by freemen are devour'd—
 A feller fate attends the generous steed—
 Outworn with toil, he gluts a freeman's cur.

But Leonard—and the gentle Susan? Where
 Walk they the while? Oft, when the rafter'd hall
 Shook with the jovial laugh of loyalty,
 Till each grim ancestor and grandam fair,
 That on the smokey canvass smiled for aye,
 In multiplied confusion roll'd around,
 Would Leonard steal into the quiet air
 Of pensive Night, Love's trusty confidante,
 To meet his Susan on the silent hill,
 And silent sit beneath the silent moon;
 His hand laid lightly on his Susan's palm,
 While thousand, thousand voices, heard afar,
 Were soft as murmurs of the distant ocean—
 Solemn and soft—and yet a weary sound
 To her, who knew her parent's heart estranged
 From him she long'd to call her second sire;
 For Susan's father, reckless of her tears,
 Of ancient neighbourhood, and deeds of love
 Too natural to call for gratitude—
 Blind to the pleadings of the meek, sad eyes
 Of his child's mother, and his only child—
 Had pledged his voice, and purse, and utmost power
 To his friend's rival—whether borne away
 By the loud torrent of the popular cry,
 That universal voucher, for whose truth

No man can vouch—or vex'd by wounded pride
 For prudent counsel by his friend refused,
 Or by congenial baseness, and the bent
 And instinct of an earthy, purblind spirit
 That hated honour, as a darkling fiend
 Detests the sun, to kindred baseness drawn—
 My Muse, unversed in vileness, not reveals.

Fearful the perils that beset our youth,
 But are there none that lie in wait for age ?
 Is not the sight, whose erring faith mistakes
 An exhalation for a guiding star,
 Better than total blindness ? Good it were
 To be a Persian, and adore the sun
 At morn and eve—or deem the changeful moon
 Imperial arbitress of fickle fate,
 To hail the day-dawn as a visible God,
 Or, trembling, think the terrible vast sea
 A living Godhead in a wrathful mood,
 Rather than dwell within the gaol of sense,
 To see no God in all the beauteous world—
 To feel no God in man.—

'Twas sad to mark
 The passive Susan pace the public way ;
 Her meek, obedient head with weight oppress'd
 Of gaudy colours, that but ill became
 Her pale fair cheek—to hear her soft low voice
 Reluctant task'd to warble scurril rhymes,
 Set by some ale-bench Pindar to such tunes
 As carmen whistle. Worse it was to find
 The Nabob and his train of Bacchanals

Establish'd in her home ; but worst to see
 Her Leonard welcomed with such courtesy
 As courtiers use to men they hate and fear.

In vain the eulogists of good old times
 Upheld the good old cause. New wealth prevail'd
 And Leonard's sire, the lavish contest past,
 Found he had fell'd his ancient oaks in vain,
 In vain had pawn'd his green, ancestral fields.
 Bereft his son of just and lineal hopes,
 Quench'd the grey vigour of his kindly age
 With loyal draughts, and joyless nights of noise
 In vain. Indignant he is doom'd to hear
 The upstart's triumph clamouring at his doors—
 And finds—the sole reward of thousands spent
 For Church and King—the prudent world's contempt,
 Unspotted honour, and a shatter'd frame,
 A broken fortune, and a broken heart.

Sad change for Leonard—to no gainful art
 Or science bred, untaught to bow his way
 Through servile crowds, to fix the flitting eye
 Of selfish patronage, or cling secure
 To the huge timbers of the rotting state
 A battening barnacle, by sloth retain'd,
 And nourish'd by decay. His wants, though few.
 Were yet refined, and he had known the bliss
 Of leisure, which is truest liberty.
 And—cruel fate—the time is now fulfill'd,
 The year, the month, the long expected day
 Of expectation, which had look'd so fair
 In the dim brightness of futurity—

The very day prefixed to shake the tower
 Of the old ivied church with wedding peals,
 When Susan should have trod the church-way path
 A blushing bride. The weary week past o'er,
 And Leonard, in the melancholy hall,
 Sat listless, gazing on the naked walls,
 And bare, cold floors—for greedy law had stripp'd
 The antique mansion of its tapestry,
 And Vandal officers had laid their hands
 On musty relics of the olden time.
 On smokey pedigrees, and antlers vast
 Of stags, that fell ere the great Baron fought
 At Agincourt ; brown bills in rusty ranks,
 Primeval guns, of formidable length,
 With stubborn matchlocks—all immovable ;
 Fragments of centuries past, not worth a doit—
 But precious ever, and twice precious now,
 When all the glory, bounty, wealth, and power
 Derived from dark imaginative days,
 Was clean departed from the honour'd line—
 Say rather, vanish'd from the realm of chance,
 To be for aye a thought, a deathless truth,
 A thing of monumental memory.

“ 'Tis a fair show ; a goodly bridal-bower ;
 Yon grim officials too ! attendance meet
 To grace a marriage feast.” Thus Leonard spake,
 And could have laugh'd in downright agony ;
 But check'd his soul, and almost thought he bore
 His grief most patiently ; for sorrow seem'd
 Reproachful to his father. Mute he sat,
 Culling old saws and comfortable texts,

To cheer the old man's desolate heart, and still
 Rejecting all ; when lo ! a message came,
 An instant summons from his Susan's sire.
 Like one lone wandering on a perilous moor,
 That hears a voice in darkness, and proceeds,
 In desperate haste, to meet or friend or foe,
 Regardless whether—Leonard hurried forth
 To meet his doom. A little gloomy hope,
 Much like despair, was kindled in his eye,
 And made his heart beat audible and hard.
 The faint alarm had caught his father's view,
 As silently he clasp'd his palsied hand ;
 The old man shook his head with such a smile
 As had no comfort in't.

With lowering looks,

And a proud menial's scantied courtesy,
 Was Leonard usher'd to the well-known room
 Vocal so oft with Susan's melody,
 And gladden'd with her smile. 'Tis double woe,
 The woe that comes where joy was sweetest found.
 There sat the parents of his wife betroth'd,
 Dear as his own, in happier days, and call'd
 By the same filial names. The mother meek,
 With sad o'ercharged eyes that dare not weep,
 Obey'd the mandate of her husband's hand,
 And hastily, without a word, withdrew,
 Casting on Leonard one mute pleading glance,
 That said—'Remember, he is Susan's father—
 Though your's he will not be.'—Long pause ensued—
 At length the stern man spake : "Young Sir," said he.
 "I have an irksome duty to perform,
 But 'tis a duty that I owe my child.

Few words are best—my daughter is not for you—
 My reasons need no tongue to plead for them—
 Urge not my promise—you are not the youth
 To whom my word was given—I pledged the girl
 To the inheritor of my friend's estate,
 Not to the heir of my foe's beggary."

Big-hearted Leonard neither dropt a tear,
 Nor spake reproachful word ; more grieved to find
 A soul so base in form so long revered,
 Than for the signet set to his despair—
 The coward murder of his dying hope,
 And the sweet records of young innocent years
 Transform'd to shame-envenom'd agony.

Yet long he linger'd at the gate, and raised
 To Susan's chamber window a long look
 Of resignation deep—a long farewell ;
 But she was nowhere to be seen ; and yet,
 He fondly dream'd—what will not lovers dream ?—
 He heard her sigh, and leant a listening ear
 To hear her sigh once more.—Full well he knew,
 Though nought distrusting Susan's simple faith,
 His claim annull'd—his suit by her forbidden.

Not all the sophistry of love, though urged
 With eloquence divine, and looks of warmth
 To thaw the " chaste and consecrated snow "

On Dian's bosom, could induce the maid
 To wave obedience, or make head against
 The strong religion of her filial fear.

So, hopeless—purposeless, he loiter'd home,
 If home it could be call'd—begarrison'd
 With portly bailiffs, and by duns besieged ;
 Keen-eyed solicitors. and purple hosts,

And sallow usurers—miscreants, that grow fat,
 On general ruin—bills mis-spelt, as long
 As his old father's boasted pedigree.
 Proud Leonard felt it shame, a burning shame,
 To waste a sigh upon his personal grief
 Amid the helpless downfall. Nought he told,
 His father nought inquired, for all was known
 Without the painful index of sad speech.
 They talk'd of things long past—of better times,
 And seem'd as they were merry. 'Twas the last,
 The saddest night beneath the ancient roof—
 The next beheld them inmates of a gaol—
 And gaol-bird was the word that Susan heard,
 Whenever Leonard or his sire was named.

There is no man can love as woman loves,
 With such a holy, pure, and patient fire,
 Or Susan had gone mad.—She pray'd, and wept,
 And wept, and pray'd—but never look'd reproach
 To him, for whose degenerate soul she pray'd—
 And pray'd she might not scorn him, might not hate
 The author of her being. Though no word—
 No brief adieu—had closed the failing eyes
 Of her departing hope—for every port
 And inlet to her home was closed, and none
 Dared name her lover; yet firm faith survived,
 The strong assurance of a vow enroll'd
 In heaven, and her own wise innocence
 Forbade suspicion of her Leonard's truth,
 And bade her live, though sure a blessed thing
 For her it were to die. What life was hers!
 Hard-eyed rebuke, and wrath and ribald scorn,

Solicitation of a mother's tears,
 And the perpetual siege of fancies fair
 Reflected from old days of happiness,
 With Babel dissonance her heart assailing,
 Made misery many-faced—a hideous dream—
 A monster multiform—a dizzy round
 Of aye-revolving aspects—woeful all.
 Sweet Susan ever was a lowly maid,
 Unpractised in the arts of maiden scorn ;
 Yet she could teach “ her sorrow to be proud,”
 And walk the earth in virgin majesty,
 As one who owed no homage to its rules,
 No tribute to its faithless flattery.
 She loved her silent, solitary woe,
 And thought, poor soul ! all nature sympathized
 With her lone sorrow. Every playful breeze
 That dallied with the moonlight on the leaves,
 Sung mournful solace to her wounded spirit,
 As if it were indeed a mournful sound,
 Mournfully kind. The gladsome nightingale,
 That finds the day too short for half her bliss,
 And warbles on, when all the tuneful grove
 Is silent as the music of the spheres,
 Sounded to her like wakeful melancholy
 Dwelling on themes of old departed joy.
 The nightingale grew dumb—the cuckoo fled—
 And broad-eyed Summer glared on hill and plain—
 And still no word. Was Leonard dead, or flown
 Before the swallow ? Doth he dwell forlorn
 As the last primrose in the shadowy glade,
 That bloom'd too late, and must too soon decline ?
 The birds are silent, and the shallow brook

Is hardly heard beneath the dark, dark weight
 Of over-roofing boughs ? And is he gone—
 Gone like the riotous waters of the rill,
 That smoking, gleaming, whitening on their way,
 Display'd an earth-born Iris to the sun,
 And in their beauty and their pride exhaled ?
 Ah no ! He lives, in sunless prison pent,
 Watching the death-bed of his prison'd sire ;
 Who, on low pallet stretch'd, in noisome den,
 Scarce wider than a captive lion's cage,
 Breathes the mephitic and incarcerate fog
 That morn not freshens nor still even cools :
 His dosing slumbers broke with clank of chains,
 And felons' curses, and the horrid mirth
 Of reckless misery. Beside him sat
 His once gay consort, squalid now, and lost
 To self-respect, with grey dishevell'd locks,
 All loosely wrapt in rags of silk array
 Her aspect, channell'd with impatient tears ;
 Now sullen mute, now loud in wordy woe,
 Chiding the murmurs of her gasping spouse,
 And the meek patience of her boy. 'Twas well
 The poor old man heard little, nothing mark'd,
 For drowsy death lay heavy at the gates
 Of outward sense, and the beleaguered brain
 Refused its office. Long he lay, and seem'd
 A moving, panting corse, without a mind,
 By some foul necromancer's horrid charm
 In life detain'd. No word to living soul
 He spake, and though he sometimes mutter'd prayers,
 His understanding pray'd not. Leonard pray'd—
 But silent as the voiceless intercourse

Of spirits bodiless—whose every thought
 Is adoration. Not in Heaven unmark'd
 The mute petition. Sudden as the gleam
 Of heavenly visitation, a new light,
 A glory settled on the pallid face
 Of Leonard's sire. The dull unmeaning eye
 Of dotage and disease, in rapture fixt,
 Glow'd with a saintly fire. The imprison'd soul,
 As rushing gladly to its dungeon doors,
 Peer'd out, and look'd abroad—one moment—then
 Ecstatic flew. "I am going to leave thee, boy—
 I thought to leave thee in far other plight—
 But that which is, must be. Unseemly 'twere
 To see a dying father claim his son's
 Forgiveness—else might I implore of thee
 To spare thy foolish father's memory—
 The world will deal ungently with my name,
 But, Leonard, never let thy heart consent
 To the blind, coward, malice of the crowd—
 And if the prayer of thy father's spirit
 Be heard in Paradise, my soul shall pray,
 Even at the foot of the Almighty's throne,
 For thy best welfare. Good it is that thou
 Hast been afflicted in thy lusty youth,
 So happier days shall close thine honour'd age—
 And, dear my child, I am in haste to Heaven ;
 My sin is pardon'd, and a mystic robe
 Of woof celestial decks my better part.
 But my poor limbs—far from the reverend dust
 Of my dead ancestry—without a chaunt,
 Hatchment, or hearse, or green memorial sprigs
 Of shiver'd box-wood, and sweet rosemary,

Must soon be earth'd up in a vulgar grave.
 The hireling shepherd of this wretched fold
 Will hurry o'er his ill-paid task of prayer—
 And I shall be forgot. But when the smile
 Of Fortune shall repay thy honest toil,
 Restore thy father's relics to the home
 Of thy forefathers' bones. Thy mother—know
 She is thy mother, and thy father's wife.
 O God, receive my spirit !" Thus he spake—
 Clasp'd his son's hand—and died without a groan.
 Did Leonard weep ? Oh, no ; he knew too well
 The selfish baseness of a private woe—
 He shed no tear upon the barren grave,
 But cast a long, sad, yearning look to Heaven,
 And thought of Susan and his sainted sire.
 There is a spell in patient filial love,
 Can charm the deafest and the hardest heart,
 And e'en relax the gripe of hungry law.
 So the bleak mercy of a liberal age,
 Dismiss'd poor Leonard, and his mother, mark'd
 With branded and convicted poverty,
 From the ungenial refuge of a gaol
 Into the general air.

'Tis sweet to see
 The day-dawn creeping gradual o'er the sky :
 The silent sun at noon is bright and fair,
 And the calm eve is lovely ; but 'tis sad
 To sink at eve on the dark dewy turf,
 And feel that none in all the countless host
 Of glimmering stars beholds one little spot,
 One humble home of thine. The vast void sky,

In all its trackless leagues of azure light,
 Has not one breath of comfort for the wretch
 Whom houseless penury enfranchises,
 A brother freeman of the midnight owl,
 A sworn acquaintance of the howling winds
 And flaggy-pinion'd rain. Now Leonard leaves
 The prison gates ;—but whither will he go ?
 Must he, the high-born, high-soul'd youth, implore
 The stinted kindness of offended kin—
 Crave pardon for the deadly sin of need ;
 And wrench from shame, not love, a pittance less
 Than goes to feed the hounds ? This he must do.
 Or eat the bread of loathsome beggary ;
 For though he did not scorn the honest plough,
 He knew not how to guide it. Rustic churls
 Bemock'd his threadbare, pale gentility,
 And would not grant him leave to toil for hire.
 Oh, cruel fate !—his spirit stoop'd to beg
 A shelter for his mother—'Twas refused.
 No matter—There was kindness in the clouds.
 And son and mother lay secure, beneath
 The sylvan roof of charitable boughs.
 The Lady, proudest of the proud, forgot
 Her in-bred pride, and wept consoling tears,
 And praying—pour'd a blessing on her child.

There is more mercy in the merciful God
 Than e'er inhabited the pregnant eyes
 Of men, who waste unprofitable tears
 For all imaginable woes, and leave
 The poor uncomforted, to wail their own.
 There came a kinsman from a foreign land,

O'erfraught with wealth,—whose British heart, unspoil'd,
 Had stood the siege of Oriental suns,
 And the dire sap of all-transmuting gold—
 A rich good man.—He blamed the tardy winds
 Which would not let him free his old kind coz
 From durance vile of helpless poverty ;
 But still the son survived—the widow'd wife
 Still drew her woeful breath—and he had power
 To call the orphan to a friendly home—
 To bid the widow wear her comely weeds
 Beside a plenteous and a smiling board.
 Few days transpired, and Leonard was again
 The heir of thousands—the undoubted lord
 Of his paternal acres, all redeem'd.
 The ancient pictures re-assumed their place
 In the old smoky hall—the antique arms
 In dusty state resumed their dusk repose.
 The branching trophies, and the furry spoils
 Of many an oft-related, endless chace,
 Found their due station ; while the worn-out steeds,
 Repurchased, roam'd the venerable park,
 From vilest drudgery freed. The hallow'd bones
 Of the late lord, unearth'd, were laid in state
 With old, ancestral, lordly rottenness ;
 And if the pride of earth be known in Heav'n,
 Earth's noblest pride—then Leonard's Angel sire
 Look'd down exultant on his marble tomb,
 And blest his only child.

And shall no drop
 Of all this blessing comfort Susan's soul ?
 Right sorry now, I ween, her sordid sire
 For his o'er prudent haste, and breach of faith :—

He saw his daughter's beauty marr'd with tears ;
 Her soul benumb'd with dull continuous woe,
 And a strange wildness in her sad, soft eye,
 That rather told of visionary gleams,
 And silent commerce with the viewless world,
 Than aught which man may love. If e'er she spake,
 Her voice was hollow as the moaning wind,
 An echo of despair. Yet she would sing
 Throughout the long hours of the frosty night :
 It would have wrung your very heart to hear her—
 She sang so like a ghost. " Will the proud youth."
 Thus, measuring other natures by his own,
 Her father thought—" Will Leonard love her still ?
 Will the large-acred heir, whom late I spurn'd,
 Accept my child—when all her bloom is fled—
 Her eye no longer bright—and her sweet wits
 By sorrow crazed ? I did him grievous wrong—
 And will he sue me for my wither'd rose.
 And give the glory of his ancient name—
 The lusty verdure of his years, and all
 His hopes on earth, to a poor moonstruck maid,
 The daughter of his father's enemy ! "
 Base, slanderous fears ! For Leonard's love was strong
 Beyond the might of mutability.
 No rash impatience of the youthful blood,
 No sudden liking of enamour'd sense,
 His vow had prompted—and no change of hue,
 Nor loss of lively cheer, the work of woe,
 Could shake his truth. I need not say—how soon
 His suit renew'd—nor with what faint excuse
 By Susan's sire admitted.—Oh, blind haste !—
 Of unadvised bliss—that came so late,

And wrought its tyrannous effect so soon—
 For sorrow had become the element,
 The pulse, the sustenance of Susan's soul,
 And sudden joy smote like the fire of Heaven,
 That, while it brightens, slays. A hectic flush,
 Death's crimson banner, cross'd her marble cheek—
 And it was pale again.—The strife was past—
 She lies, a virgin corse, in Leonard's arms.—

He saw her shrouded relics laid to rest
 In his ancestral sepulchre. That done,
 He was a wanderer long in foreign lands :
 But when the greenness of his agony
 Was sere with age, the hoary man return'd :
 And after some few years in virtue spent,
 He died.—His bones repose in Susan's grave ;
 And he is with her, in the land where love,
 Immortal and unstain'd, is all in all.

ALBUM VERSES.

As dark hair straggling o'er a snow-white breast.
 Or the light tracks by fairy feet imprest,
 Or those which tremulous music would indite
 In the pure ether of a summer's night,
 If music's course were palpable to sight,—
 So fine, in sable tinct and sinuous grace,
 The meaning lines which female fingers trace.

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Well then may I, whose characters are quaint
 As antique legend of a monkish saint,
 As hieroglyphic of the wise Egyptian,
 Or prentice-posing doctor's learn'd prescription ;
 As Runic, Coptic, Chaldee, Erse, or Oggham,
 Or schoolboy's tasks, for which their masters flog 'em ;
 As hand of cooks, by love impelled to scrawl,
 Or hand of Bishops, which is worst of all ;—
 Well may I view the argent field with fear,
 And all the soft memorials treasured here,
 When ask'd by one to whom I can't say nay,
 My poor poetic mite of verse to pay ;
 When bid the melody of song to garble,
 Mix hemp with finest flax, and brick with marble.
 I own I like to see my works in print,—
 The page looks knowing, though there's nothing in't,—

As if a weary age had passed away
 In time-forgetting sleep since yesterday.
 There the dark cypress waved its lofty spire
 By walls of ice, and battlements of fire,
 And where the mighty banian's "echoing shade"
 Spreads far and wide its verdurous colonnade,
 The silver portals sent their lucid streams
 Adown the umbrageous aisles in lengthen'd beams :
 The fading hues, so fair, so fleet, alas !
 That o'er the cheek of eve like blushes pass
 In unabating beauty, here were blended,
 Unchanged to last till earth itself were ended.
 Now, strange to say, this work of mystic art,
 The old world's wonder, stored in every part
 With every idol of a wanton heart,—
 From artist's negligence, or art's defect,
 Or some close purpose of the architect,
 One window had, unfinish'd, unadorn'd,
 An uncouth gap, forgot, or shunn'd, or scorn'd ;
 A yawning void deform'd the gayest bower
 That e'er receiv'd a royal paramour ;
 And stranger still, not all the flowery groves
 That wav'd around, nor all the fair alcoves,
 Elaborate pride of oriental loves,
 Nor radiant splendours that outshone the skies,
 From that unsightly blank could screen the critic eyes :
 It grew the talk of all who loved to wonder,
 It help'd the crowd to stare, the wise to blunder,—
 The magic beauties ne'er perplex'd their soul,
 But all were gravell'd with that frightful hole.
 Wild is the tale, but such in fact we find
 The course and current of the general mind.

So fairest things, unnumbered and unnoted,
 Pass with the hour while rare defects are quoted—
 The timeless frost that in their cradle nips,
 The babes of April, or one short eclipse,
 One blighting meteor's momentary blaze,
 Outlast in fame an age of sunny days.

So gentle lady—may I freely call thee
 My gentle friend—it happy may befall thee.
 When this fair volume, like an honoured face,
 Or holy tomb of Saint or Martyr slain,
 In Truth's defence, or virgin void of stain,
 With gems of verse from many a region brought,
 Shall gleam effulgent with untainted thought,
 And each soft hand that loves to rest in thine,
 With dear memorial decks the beauteous shrine,
 Then the wild words, that like bewildered chimes
 Limp into tune, and stumble upon rhymes,
 And these rude characters, the meet apparel,
 Of the strange fancies of my old-world carol,
 Shall oft detain the eye that heedless strays,
 O'er the smooth page, which calls for nought but praise.
 Where all's so good, the critic senses starve all,
 But lines like mine will suit them to a marvel.
 Nay sometimes many a softer gaze beguile,
 And change a winning to a wondering smile,
 May light the orbs of darkly-rolling eyes,
 With the wide brilliance of a gay surprize,
 May prompt some voice in tones acute to ask,
 To whom was given, or who usurp'd the task,
 To set, 'mid famous Bards' melodious strains,
 The product of his own fantastic brains ?

What strange acquaintance of a maiden fair,
 Could plant a thistle in her prim parterre !
 Then may'st thou say—but say whate'er you choose,
 Or if you will, confess yourself my muse.

AN OLD MAN'S WISH.

I HAVE lived, and I have loved,
 Have lived and loved in vain ;
 Some joys, and many woes have proved,
 That may not be again ;
 My heart is cold, my eye is sere,
 Joy wins no smile, and grief no tear.

Pain would I hope, if hope I could,
 If sure to be deceived.
 There's comfort in a thought of good,
 Tho' 'tis not quite believed—
 For sweet is hope's wild warbled air,
 But—Oh—its echo is despair.

THE SABBATH-DAY'S CHILD.

TO ELIZABETH,

INFANT DAUGHTER OF THE REV. SIR RICHARD
FLEMING, BART.

PURE, precious drop of dear mortality,
Untainted fount of life's meandering stream,
Whose innocence is like the dewy beam
Of morn, a visible reality,
Holy and quiet as a hermit's dream :
Unconscious witness to the promised birth
Of perfect good, that may not grow on earth,
Nor be computed by the worldly worth
And stated limits of morality,
Fair type and pledge of full redemption given,
Through him that saith " Of such is the kingdom of
Heaven."—

Sweet infant, whom thy brooding parents love
For what thou art, and what they hope to see thee,
Unhallow'd sprites and earth-born phantoms flee thee ;
Thy soft simplicity, a hovering dove,
That still keeps watch, from blight and bane to free thee ;

With its weak wings, in peaceful care outspread,
 Fanning invisibly thy pillow'd head,
 Strikes evil powers with reverential dread,
 Beyond the sulphurous bolts of fabled Jove,
 Or whatsoe'er of Amulet or charm
 Fond Ignorance devised to save poor souls from harm.

To see thee sleeping on thy mother's breast,
 It were indeed a lovely sight to see—
 Who would believe that restless sin can be
 In the same world that holds such sinless rest ?
 Happy art thou, sweet babe, and happy she
 Whose voice alone can still thy baby cries,
 Now still itself; Yet pensive smiles, and sighs,
 And the mute meanings of a mother's eyes
 Declare her thinking, deep felicity :
 A bliss, my babe, how much unlike to thine,
 Mingled with earthly fears, yet cheer'd with hope divine.

Thou breathing image of the life of Nature !
 Say rather, image of a happy death—
 For the vicissitudes of vital breath,
 Of all infirmity the slave and creature,
 That by the act of being perisheth,
 Are far unlike that slumber's perfect peace
 Which seems too absolute and pure to cease,
 Or suffer diminution, or increase,
 Or change of hue, proportion, shape, or feature ;
 A calm, it seems, that is not, shall not be,
 Save in the silent depths of calm eternity.

A star reflected in a dimpling rill
 That moves so slow it hardly moves at all,
 The shadow of a white-robed waterfall,
 Seen in the lake beneath when all is still,
 A wandering cloud, that with its fleecy pall
 Whitens the lustre of an autumn moon,
 A sudden breeze that cools the cheek of noon,
 Not mark'd till miss'd—so soft it fades, and soon—
 Whatever else the fond inventive skill
 Of Fancy may suggest, can not supply
 Fit semblance of the sleeping life of infancy.

Calm art thou as the blessed Sabbath eve,
 The blessed Sabbath eve when thou wast born ;
 Yet sprightly as a summer Sabbath morn,
 When surely 'twere a thing unmeet to grieve ;
 When ribbons gay the village maids adorn,
 And Sabbath music, on the swelling gales,
 Floats to the farthest nooks of winding vales,
 And summons all the beauty of the dales.
 Fit music this a stranger to receive ;
 And, lovely child, it rung to welcome thee,
 Announcing thy approach with gladsome minstrelsy.

So be thy life—a gentle Sabbath, pure
 From worthless strivings of the work-day earth :
 May time make good the omen of thy birth,
 Nor worldly care thy growing thoughts immure,
 Nor hard-eyed thrift usurp the throne of mirth
 On thy smooth brow. And though fast-coming years

Must bring their fated dower of maiden fears,
 Of timid blushes, sighs, and fertile tears,
 Soft sorrow's sweetest offspring, and her cure ;
 May every day of thine be good and holy,
 And thy worst woe a pensive sabbath melancholy.

MAY, 1832.

Is this the merry May of tale and song ?
 Chill breathes the North—the sky looks chilly blue,
 The waters wear a cold and iron hue,
 Or wrinkle as the crisp wave creeps along,
 Much like an ague fit. The starry throng
 Of flowrets droop o'erdone with drenching dew,
 Or close their leaves at noon, as if they knew,
 And felt in helpless wrath, the season's wrong.
 Yet in the half-clad woods the busy birds
 Chirping with all their might to keep them warm ;
 The young hare flitting from her ferny form ;
 The vernal lowing of the amorous herds ;
 And swelling buds impatient of delay,
 Declare it should be, tho' it is not, May.

ISABEL.

WHERE dwells she now ? That life of joy
 That seem'd as Time could ne'er destroy,
 Nor frail infectious sense alloy,
 Its self-derived and self-sufficing gladness ?
 Abides she in the bounds of space,
 Or like a thought, a moment's grace,
 Is she escaped from time and place,
 The dull arithmetic of prison'd sadness ?

May she behold this spot of earth,
 This human home, that saw her birth
 Her baby tears, her infant mirth,
 The first quick stirrings of her human mind ?
 May she return to watch the flowers
 She planted last in fairy bowers ?—
They freshen yet with summer showers,
 And gambol with the frolic summer wind.

That lovely form, that face so bright,
 That changeful image of delight,
 May it no more to waking sight,
 Or spiritual ken, in very truth appear ?
 That visible shape, that kind warm glow—
 That all that Heaven vouchsafed to shew—
 'Tis gone. 'Twas all our sense could know,
 Of her we loved, whom yet we hold so dear.

The world hath lost the antique faith.
 In shade and spectre—warning wraith.
 That wander'd forth to blast, and scathe
 Poor earth-clogg'd, dark humanity.
 No more the mystic craft of hell,
 In cavern mirk, with impious spell,
 Evokes the naked souls that dwell,
 In uncreated night's inanity.

'Tis well that creed is out of date,
 And men have found, at last, though late,
 That loathing fear, and fearful hate,
 And rankling vengeance, all are cruel liars ;
 And all the doctrine that they teach
 Of ghosts that roam when owlets screech,
 Is but the false, and fatal speech,
 Of guilty terrors, or of worse desires.

But is there not a charm in love,
 To call thy spirit from above ?
 Oh—had I pinions like a dove,
 Were I like thee, a pure enfranchised soul,
 Then might I see thee as thou art,
 Receive thee in my inmost heart,
 But can it be ? She has no part,
 In all she loved beneath the steadfast pole.

REPLY.

AH—well it is—since she is gone,
 She can return no more,
 To see the face so dim and wan,
 That was so warm before.

Familiar things would all seem strange,
 And pleasure past be woe ;
 A record sad of ceaseless change,
 Is all the world below.

The very hills, they are not now,
 The hills which once they were,
 They change as we are changed, or how
 Could we the burden bear ?

Ye deem the dead are ashy pale,
 Cold denizens of gloom—
 But what are ye, who live to wail,
 And weep upon their tomb ?

She passed away, like morning dew,
Before the sun was high,
So brief her time, she scarcely knew.
The meaning of a sigh.

As round the rose its soft perfume,
Sweet love around her floated ;
Admired she grew—while mortal doom
Crept on, unfear'd, unnoted.

Love was her guardian Angel here,
But love to death resign'd her,
Tho' love was kind, why should we fear,
But holy death is kinder ?

FRAGMENT.

WHAT is the life of man ? From first to last.
 Its only substance, the unbeing past !
 The infant smiling in its sleep must dream
 Of something past, before the vexing beam
 Of daylight smote the unaccustom'd eye,
 Ere the faint mother heard its first faint cry ;
 Lull'd in its rocking nest, it seeks in vain,
 For what has been, and ne'er can be again.
 The child, through every maze of wakening lore,
 Hunts the huge shadow of what was before,
 Sees his old toys in misty phantoms glide,
 'Twixt hope and dim oblivion magnified ;
 As oft on misty hills huge spectres run,
 And stalk gigantic from the setting sun—
 Still urging onward to the world unseen,
 Yet wishing, hoping nought, but what has been.
 But what *has* been ? But *how*, and *when*, and *where* ?
 Was there a time, when, wandering in the air,
 The living spark existed, yet unnam'd,
 Unfixt, unqualitied, unlaw'd, unclaim'd,
 A drop of being, in the infinite sea,
 Whose only duty, essence, was to be ?
 Or must we seek it, where all things we find,
 In the sole purpose of creative mind—

Or did it serve, in form of stone or plant,
 Or weaving worm, or the wise politic ant,
 Its weary bondage—ere the moment came,
 When the weak spark should mount into a flame ?

TO ———

I LOVE thee—none may know how well,
 And yet—I would not have thee love me,
 To thy good heart 'twere very hell,
 To love me dear, and not approve me.

Whate'er thou lov'st it is not *thine*,
 But 'tis *thyself*—then sad it were, love,
 If thou for every sin of mine,
 Should weep, repent, mayhap, despair—love.

Then love me not—thou can'st not scorn ;
 And mind—I do not bid thee hate me.
 And if I die, oh, do not mourn,
 But if I live, *do new create* me.

EXPERTUS LOQUITUR.

“ ’TIS SAD EXPERIENCE SPEAKS.”

THERE never was a blessing, or a curse,
 So sweet, so cruel, as a knack of verse.
 When the smug stripling finds the way to rhyme,
 Glad as the wild bee ’mid a bed of thyme.
 With dulcet murmuring, all a summer’s day,
 With many a scrap of many a purposed lay—
 Fitful, yet gentle, as a summer wind,
 Pleased with himself, and pleased with all mankind,
 Sure of the praise which partial friends bestow,
 He breathes in bliss, if bliss may be below.

Pass some few years—and see where all will end.
 The hireling scribe, estranged from every friend,
 Or if one friend remain, ’tis one so brave,
 He will not quit the wreck he cannot save,
 The good man’s pity, and the proud man’s scorn,
 The Muse’s vagabond, he roams forlorn—
 Thought, wit, invention, tenderness have left him,
 All wealth of mind, save empty rhyme, bereft him—
 Yet write he must, for still he needs must eat—
 Retail fantastic sorrow by the sheet—
 Sing in his garret of the flowery grove,
 And pinched with hunger, wail the woes of love—
 Oh may all Christian souls while yet ’tis time,
 Renounce the World, the Flesh, the Devil, and Rhyme.

A FAREWELL.

NOT ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN THE AUTHOR'S
OWN NAME.

- - - -

SWEET vale, tho' I must leave
 Thy green hills and thy waters,
 Nor sing again at eve,
 To charm thy winsome daughters,
 Yet I shall fondly think of thee,
 And thy fair maids will think of me,
 When I am far away.

I'll think of thee, but not as men,
 Who vex their souls with thinking,
 With feverish thirst, the reeky fen,
 Of sluggard memory drinking,
 Nor shall thy maidens fair and free,
 With ought of sadness think of me,
 When I am far away.

The fairy lake, tho' still it seems,
 Is evermore a-flowing,
 A moment ends the silvery gleams
 That flash as we are rowing.
 Yet that smooth lake, as smooth shall flow,
 And light oars flash, when gay youths' row,
 When I am far away.

So may the tide of virgin life,
 As smooth, as quick, as clear,
 If e'er, in momentary strife,
 It dimple with a tear,
 As soon regain its sweet repose—
 And rest in peace, because it flows,
 For ever on its way.

HORACE. BOOK I., ODE 38.

“ *Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.* ”

NAY, nay, my boy—’tis not for me,
 This studious pomp of eastern luxury :
 Give me no various garlands—fine
 With linden twine,
 Nor seek, where latest lingering blows
 The solitary rose.
 Earnest I beg—add not with toilsome pain,
 One far sought blossom to the myrtle plain,
 For sure, the fragrant myrtle bough
 Looks seemliest on thy brow ;
 Nor me mis-seems, while, underneath the vine,
 Close interweaved, I quaff the rosy wine.

DEATH.

Oh ! weep not for the happy dead,
Your tears reproach the Lord ;
To him her virgin soul was wed,
And strong in love, to him she fled
From mother's house, and parent's smiling board.

Alas ! we cannot choose but weep,
For we are sore bereaven ;
And all of her that we can keep
Is but an image on the deep,
The deep calm soul, that shews reflected heaven.

If angel spirits aught may know
Of hearts they left behind,
If e'er they cast a look below,
The sacrifice of pious woe
May yield a tender joy, even to the angel kind.

INANIA MUNERA.

AH ! why should pity wet my bier,
 And give my corse her tardy tear ?
 And the same eye that coldly slew me,
 With tears untimely warm bedew me !
 Alas ! for harm is fleet as wind,
 And healing ever lags behind.

Perhaps, when life well nigh is spent,
 She'll faintly smile a sad consent,—
 And, just before she sees me die,
 Will leave a kind repentant sigh :
 For sigh of ruth—Oh, wayward fate !—
 Will ever come—and come too late.

She cannot undo what is done ;
 For, if a smile were like the sun,
 And sighs more sweet than gales that creep
 O'er rosy beds where fairies sleep,
 And every tear like summer rain
 To thirsty fields—'twere all in vain.

For never sun so bright was seen
 Could make a leaf that's sere be green ;
 Nor spicy gale, nor April shower,
 Restore to bloom a faded flower :
 Thus sun, and wind, and balmy rain,
 And smiles, and sighs, and tears, are vain.

TO MY UNKNOWN SISTER-IN-LAW.

MARY, our eyes are strangers, but our hearts
 Are knit in active sympathy of love
 For one, whom love of thee hath sanctified.
 The lawless wanderings of his youthful thought
 For thee he curbed—for thee assumed the yoke
 Of humble duty—bade the world farewell,
 With all its vanities of prose and rhyme—
 The secular pride of startling eloquence,
 The victory of wordy warfare—all
 That charm'd his soul in academic bowers.

Not small the struggle and the sacrifice,
 When men of many fancies, daring minds,
 That for the substance and the form of truth
 Delight to fathom their own bottomless deeps.
 Submit to authorised creeds and positive laws—
 Appointed rites and ceremonial duty—
 And he, the pastor of a christian flock,
 That is no hireling drudging at a task
 Ungenial, nor intruder, bold and proud,
 Unhallow'd, unanointed, self-inspired.
 Of all men hath the greatest need of love,
 To keep his thoughts, his hopes, his heart at home.—
 If human speech have aught of holiness,
 'Tis all compris'd in three thrice-holy names

Of Father, Husband, Minister of Christ :—
 Or if a holier title yet there be,
 That name is Mother.

Dearest sister, I
 Am one of whom thou doubtless hast heard much—
 Not always well.—My name too oft pronounced
 With sighs, despondent sorrow, and reproach,
 By lips that fain would praise, and ever bless me.
 Yet deem not hardly of me : who best know
 Most gently censure me,—and who believes
 The dark inherent mystery of sin
 Doubts not the will and potency of God
 To change, invigorate, and purify
 The self-condemning heart.

Good night :—e'en now
 Perhaps thou art sleeping by my brother's side,
 Or listening gladly to the soft, sweet breath
 Of thy dear babe—while I must seek a couch
 Lonely, and haunted much by visions strange,
 And sore perplexity of roving dreams,
 The spectres manifold of murdered hours,—
 But yet, good night—good be the night to thee,
 And bright the morrow :—Once again, good night.

A MEDLEY.

Shall I sing of little rills,
 That trickle down the yellow hills.
 To drive the Fairie's water mills !—
 Rills, upon whose pebbly brink.
 Mountain birds may hop and drink—
 Perching with a neck awry—
 Darting upwards to the sky—
 The artless cunning of their eye—
 Then away, away, away—
 Up to the clouds that look so grey—
 Away, away, in the clear blue heaven.
 Far o'er the thin mist that beneath is driven—
 Now they sink, and now they soar.
 Now poised upon the plummy oar—
 Do they seek—at brightest noon,
 For the light-enveiled moon—
 Climbing upwards would they know
 Where the stars at morning go—
 If I err not—no—no—no—
 Soar they high, or skim they low,
 Every little bird has still.
 His heart beside the mountain rill.

What if we have lost the creed,
 Which thought the brook a God indeed ?

Or a flood of passionate tears,
 Inexhaustible by years ?
 Or imagined, in the lymph,
 The semblance of a virgin nymph,
 With panting terror, flying ever,
 From hairy Satyr's foul endeavour ?
 Hence ! phantoms of a blinded age,
 That dream'd of nought but lust and rage,
 The echo of a Sabbath bell
 Is sweeter in the lonely dell,
 Than the quaint fable of the wood-god's lay,
 That only warbled to betray.

Ah—never, never may the thought be mine,
 Though sung by poets old in song divine,
 Which deem'd the pure, and undisturbed sky,
 The palace of a tyrant deity—
 Which in the thunder, heard a voice of anger,
 And ruthless vengeance in the storm's loud clan-
 gour,
 Which found in every whisper of the woods,
 In every moaning of the voiceful floods,
 A long record of perishable languish,
 Immortal echo of a mortal anguish.

 Nay—mine be still,
 The happy, happy faith—
 That in deep silence hymning saith—
 That every little rill,
 And every small bird, trilling joyfully—
 Tells a sweet tale of hope, and love, and peace,
 Bidding to cease,
 The heart's sharp pangs, aye throbbing woefully.

Or shall I sing of happy hours,
 Number'd by opening and by closing flowers ?
 Of smiles, and sighs that give no pain,
 And seem as they were heav'd in vain—
 Softly heard in leafy bowers,
 Blent with the whisper of the vine,
 The half-blush of the eglantine,
 And the pure sweetness of the jessamine :
 What is it those sighs confess ?
 Idle are they, as I guess,
 And yet they tell, all is not well :—
 There is a secret, dim, demurring,
 There is a restless spirit stirring,—
 Joy itself, the heart o'erloading,
 Hath a sense of sad foreboding.

Then away to the meadows, where April's swift shadows
 Glide soft o'er the vernal bright patches of green,
 Like waves on the ocean, the wheat blades in motion,
 Look blither, and brighter, where sunbeams have been.
 So little, little joys on earth,
 Passing gleams of restless mirth—
 Momentary fits of laughter
 Still bequeath a blessing after—
 Flitting by on angel wing—
 And like voices perishing.
 At the instant of their birth,
 Never, never, count their worth,
 By the time of their enduring—
 They are garners in a dearth,
 Pleasant thoughts for age securing—
 Rich deposits, firm ensuring,

Bliss, if bliss below may be,
And a joy for memory.

Such themes I sang—and such I fain would sing,
Oft as the green buds shew the summer near—
But what availeth me to welcome spring,
When one dull winter is my total year.

When the pure snow-drops couch beneath the snow,
And storms long tarrying, come too soon at last,
I see the semblance of my private woe,
And tell it to the dilatory blast.

Yet will I hail the sunbeam as it flies—
And bid the universal world be glad—
With my brief joy all souls shall sympathise—
And only I, will all alone be sad.

THOUGHTS.

On, sacred Freedom ! thou that art so fair,
 That all, who once have seen thee, love thee ever—
 Thou apparition, that hast been so rare
 That wise men say thou wert embodied never ;
 And learned sages, doating on their lore,
 Say thou hast been, and never shalt be more.

When Reason—that whate'er it is, must be—
 Was tangled in the complex web of life,
 And Sin, the fruit of that forbidden tree,
 Made human choice an everlasting strife ;
 Then every Passion, native to the hour,
 Claim'd Reason's privilege and Reason's power.

Yet some there are, and some that still have been,
 Who feel, and hate, yet cannot cease to feel
 The conscious issue of the cause unseen,
 The fate that whirls around the restless wheel—
 Some to the stars ascribe the inborn evil,
 Some to the Gods, and others to the devil,

To live without a living soul
 To feel the spirit daily pining,
 Sinking beneath the base control
 Of mindless chance, itself consigning
 To the dull impulse of oppressive time,
 To find the guilt without the power of crime.—

Such is the penance, and the meed
 Of thoughts that, boasting to be free,
 Spurning the dictates of a practic creed,
 Are tangled with excess of liberty,
 Making themselves sole arbiters of right,
 Trampling on hallow'd use with proud delight.

Perchance they roam in Duty's sacred name,
 Commission'd to erect the world anew—
 All worldly ties, all interests they disclaim,
 Sworn votaries of the beautiful and true ;
 But vainly deem their own device, in sooth,
 The very substance of eternal truth.

Their duty still is Duty to deny,
 To burst her bonds and cast her cords away :
 As some turn rebels for pure loyalty,
 And some, to save the soul, the body slay :
 If any law they own, that law decrees,
 That sovereign right is born of each man's phantasies.

'Twere woe to tell what lamentable wreck
 Such dreams may bring upon the public weal.
 If once restraint be broken from the neck
 Of such as grossly think, and fiercely feel,
 In whom the noble parts by Nature lent,
 Are sway'd and biass'd from their kindly bent.

Thralls of the world, to whom the world affords
 No hope but only this—to toil for food,
 And eat that they may toil—vassals of lords
 With slavish minds and tyrant wills endued,
 Whose only charity is selfish waste,
 Whose brightest honour 'tis, to sin with taste.

The master of a slave is never free,
 But still himself the slave of sensual fear :—
 Woe to mankind—for ever doom'd to be
 The slaves of slaves. The only freedom here
 Lives in the spirit that disowns the bands,
 And dares refuse imperious Fate's commands.

From age to age, beneath the base control
 Of servile time, we drudge in sloth or toil :
 If hope of freedom fire the indignant soul,
 Then follows terror wild, and bloody spoil—
 Mad Revolution, like a headlong flood,
 O'erwhelms alike the evil and the good.

ADDRESS
TO CERTAIN GOLD FISHES.

RESTLESS forms of living light
Quivering on your lucid wings,
Cheating still the curious sight
With a thousand shadowings ;—
Various as the tints of even,
Gorgeous as the hues of heaven,
Reflected on your native streams
In fitting, flashing, billowy gleams !

Harmless warriors, clad in mail
Of silver breastplate, golden scale ;—
Mail of Nature's own bestowing,
With peaceful radiance mildly glowing,—
Fleet are ye, as fleetest galley
Or pirate rover sent from Sallee ;
Keener than the Tartar's arrow,
Sport ye in your sea so narrow.

Was the sun himself your sire ?
Were ye born of vital fire ?
Or of the shade of golden flowers,
Such as we fetch from eastern bowers,
To mock this murky clime of ours ?

Upwards, downwards, now ye glance,
 Weaving many a mazy dance ;
 Seeming still to grow in size
 When ye would elude our eyes—
 Pretty creatures ! we might deem
 Ye were happy as ye seem,—
 As gay, as gamesome, and as blithe,
 As light, as loving, and as lithe,
 As gladly earnest in your play,
 As when ye gleam'd in far Cathay ;

And yet, since on this hapless earth
 There's small sincerity in mirth,
 And laughter oft is but an art
 To drown the outcry of the heart ;
 It may be, that your ceaseless gambols,
 Your wheelings, dartings, divings, rambles,
 Your restless roving round and round
 The circuit of your chrystal bound,—
 Is but the task of weary pain,
 An endless labour, dull and vain ;
 And while your forms are gaily shining,
 Your little lives are inly pining !
 Nay—but still I fain would dream
 That ye are happy as ye seem,
 Deck'd in Oriental pride,
 By homely British fire-side.

WHAT I HAVE HEARD.

I'VE heard the merry voice of spring,
 When thousand birds their wild notes fling,
 Here and there, and every where,
 Stirring the young and lightsome air ;—
 I've heard the many-sounding seas,
 And all their various harmonies :—
 The tumbling tempest's dismal roar,
 On the waste and wreck-strew'd shore—
 The howl and the wail of the prison'd waves,
 Clamouring in the ancient caves,
 Like a stifled pain that asks for pity :—
 And I have heard the sea at peace,
 When all its fearful noises cease,
 Lost in one soft and multitudinous ditty,
 Most like the murmur of a far off city :—
 Nor less the blither notes I know,
 To which the inland waters flow,—
 The rush of rocky-bedded rivers,
 That madly dash themselves to shivers ;
 But anon, more prudent growing,
 O'er countless pebbles smoothly flowing,
 With a dull continuous roar,
 Hie they onward, evermore :

To their everlasting tune,
 When the sun is high at noon,
 The little billows, quick and quicker,
 Weave their mazes, thick and thicker,
 And beneath in dazzling glances,
 Labyrinthine lightning dances,
 Snaky network intertwining,
 With thousand molten colours shining :
 Mosaic rich with living light,
 With rainbow jewels gaily dight—
 Such pavement never, well I ween,
 Was made, by monarch or magician,
 For Arab, or Egyptian queen ;
 'Tis gorgeous as a prophet's vision ;
 And I ken the brook, how sweet it tinkles,
 As cross the moon-light green it twinkles,
 Or heard, not seen, 'mid tangled wood,
 Where the soft stock-dove lulls her brood,
 With her one note of all most dear—
 More soothing to the heart than ear.
 And well I know the smother'd moan,
 Of that low breeze, so small and brief,
 It seems a very sigh, whose tone,
 Has much of love, but more of grief.
 I know the sound of distant bells,
 Their dying falls and lusty swells ;
 That music which the wild gale seizes,
 And fashions howsoe'er it pleases.
 And I love the shrill November blast,
 That through the brown wood hurries fast,
 And strips its old limbs bare at last,
 Then whirls the leaves in circling error,

As if instinct with life and terror—
Now bursting out enough to deafen,
The very thunder in the heaven ;
Now sinking dolefully and dreary,
Weak as a child with sport a weary.
And after a long night of rain,
When the warm sun comes out again,
I've heard the myriad-voiced rills,
The many tongues, of many hills—
All gushing forth in new-born glory,
Striving each to tell its story—
Yet every little brook is known,
By a voice that is its own,
Each exulting in the glee,
Of its new prosperity.

SONNET.

ALL Nature ministers to Hope. The snow
 Of sluggard Winter, bedded on the hill,
 And the small tinkle of the frozen rill—
 The swoln flood's sullen roar, the storms that go
 With crash, and howl, and horrid voice of woe,
 Making swift passage for their lawless will—
 All prophecy of good. The hungry trill
 Of the lone birdie, cowering close below
 The dripping eaves—it hath a kindly feeling,
 And cheers the life that lives for milder hours.
 Why, then, since Nature still is busy healing,
 And Time, the waster, his own work concealing,
 Decks every grave with verdure and with flowers,—
 Why should Despair oppress immortal powers?

BY A FRIEND.

I HAVE heard thy sweet voice in the song,
 And listened with delight—
 I've seen thee in the glittering throng,
 The fairest mid'st the bright—
 I've mark'd thee smile on gallants gay,
 And envied them the lot,
 While from the crowd I turn'd away,
 Alone regarded not.

Oh, Lady ! it were vain, I own,
 To hope for charms like thine !
 The brow that would beseech a crown
 Will frown on love like mine :
 That form of light—that heavenly face,
 Those eyes of sweetest hue,
 Were form'd some kingly throne to grace,
 And not for me to sue.

Yet, though forbidden by despair
 The dream of happier hours—
 As once I wreath'd thy sunny hair
 With Summer's brightest flowers—
 I'll follow still, with love unseen,
 Thy smile, thy voice's tone ;
 My heart shall own no other queen,
 But worship thee alone.

POIETES APOIETES.

No hope have I to live a deathless name,
 A power immortal in the world of mind,
 A sun to light with intellectual flame,
 The universal soul of human kind.

Not mine the skill in memorable phrase,
 The hidden truths of passion to reveal,
 To bring to light the intermingling ways,
 By which unconscious motives darkling steal.

To show how forms the sentient heart affect,
 How thoughts and feelings mutually combine,
 How oft the pure, impassive intellect
 Shares the mischances of his mortal shrine.

Nor can I summons from the dark abyss
 Of time, the spirit of forgotten things,
 Bestow unfading life on transient bliss—
 Bid memory live with “ healing on its wings.”

Oh give a substance to the haunting shades,
 Whose visitation shames the vulgar earth.
 Before whose light the ray of morning fades.
 And hollow yearning chills the soul of mirth.

I have no charm to renovate the youth
 Of old authentic dictates of the heart,—
 To wash the wrinkles from the face of Truth,
 And out of Nature form creative Art.

Divinest Poesy!—'tis thine to make
 Age young—youth old—to baffle tyrant Time,
 From antique strains the hoary dust to shake,
 And with familiar grace to crown new rhyme.

Long have I loved thee—long have loved in vain,
 Yet large the debt my spirit owes to thee,
 Thou wreath'd'st my first hours in a rosy chain,
 Rocking the cradle of my infancy.

The lovely images of earth and sky
 From thee I learn'd within my soul to treasure ;
 And the strong magic of thy minstrelsy
 Charms the world's tempest to a sweet, sad measure.

Nor Fortune's spite—nor hopes that once have been—
 Hopes which no power of Fate can give again,—
 Not the sad sentence—that my life must wean
 From dear domestic joys—nor all the train.

Of pregnant ills—and penitential harms
 That dog the rear of youth unwisely wasted,
 Can dim the lustre of thy stainless charms,
 Or sour the sweetness that in thee I tasted.

FROM PETRARCH.

Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde.

THE birds piped mournfully ; the dark green leaves
 Moved, sweetly trembling, to the summer breeze,—
 And deep and low, the lucid rill, that weaves
 Its murmuring mazes in the flowery leas,
 Warbled along its old monotonies :—
 Such blended sounds my reckless ear received,
 And hearing, heard not,—while my spirit grieved,
 Loving its grief, and feeding its disease.
 A mournful strain I comm'd—when she for whom
 I vext my soul, because she was conceal'd,
 Shone forth on high, to wondering sense reveal'd :—
 “ Why ever thus,” said she, “ thy days consume ?
 Dying. I live,—and when I closed my eyes
 They open'd to the light of Paradise.”

REGENERATION.

I NEED a cleansing change within—
 My life must once again begin—
 New hope I need, and youth renew'd,
 And more than human fortitude,—
 New faith, new love, and strength to cast
 Away the fetters of the past.

Ah ! why did fabling Poets tell
 That Lethe only flows in Hell ?
 As if, in truth, there was no river,
 Whereby the leper may be clean,
 But that which flows, and flows for ever,
 And crawls along, unheard, unseen,
 Whence brutish spirits, in contagious shoals,
 Quaff the dull drench of apathetic souls.

Ah, no ! but Lethe flows aloft
 With lulling murmur, kind and soft
 As voice which sinners send to heaven
 When first they feel their sins forgiven :
 Its every drop as bright and clear
 As if indeed it were a tear,
 Shed by the lovely Magdalen
 For him that was despised of men.

It is the only fount of bliss
In all the human wilderness—
It is the true Bethesda—solely
Endued with healing might, and holy :—
Not once a year, but evermore—
Not one, but all men to restore.

O Fons Blandusiae, splendidior vitro,
 Dulci digne mero, non sine floribus,
 Cras donaberis haedo.

BLANDUSIAN spring, more gaily bright,
 In thy never-ceasing birth,
 Than gem compact of solar light,
 That, fetter'd long in darksome earth,
 Leaps forth to greet a kindred ray—
 Thou art worth a Poet's lay.

Flowers—they we will not give,—
 Thou hast plenty of thy own ;
 Little lambkins ;—let them live,
 Thou wert loath to hear them moan :
 Let them frisk upon thy bourn,
 And in thee view the budding horn.

Well I know, an ancient Poet
 Promised thee a kid to-morrow—
 I, a Christian Bard, well know it,—
 If he paid it, 'twas thy sorrow :—
 But he never did the thing
 Which he was constrain'd to sing.

Poet he, that would have been
 A Christian Poet if he could,—
 One that felt far more, I ween,
 Than he ever understood,—
 One that only wanted telling
 The truth that in his heart was dwelling.

Blandusian Fount ! I know not thee,
 And learned critics much are troubled,
 To find, if yet a stream there be,
 Where, long of yore, thy waters bubbled.
 And I could almost wish there were not,
 Since all who loved thee dearly are not.

The barren rocks are still the same—
 The fertile streams are changing ever,
 So, lives, in nature's endless fame,
 The Carthaginian's vain endeavour—
 But, Horace, we can only guess
 The sweet home of thy happiness.

Yet fare thee well, thou lovely spring,
 And never may thy nymphs desert thee,
 For while one Bard on earth may sing,
 Not all the powers of earth can hurt thee :
 And tho' no lamb to thee we give,
 Blest shalt thou be as long as lambkins live.

WRITTEN IN JANUARY, 1833.

THE old year is gone—so uncivil was I,
That I made not a couplet to bid him good bye,
But now that the new year is fairly come in,
Not to bid him a welcome, were surely a sin—
So welcome I bid him, tho' not to myself,
Yet to all who are wealthy in hope or in pelf,
All hearty good fellows to whom life is dear,
I heartily wish you a happy new year.
To the man, who is fit to be married, a wife,
And a grave unto him that is tired of life.
To my friends, that they may not have much to forgive,
To my foes, that they just may forget that I live,
To my love—that her charms may to her be a blessing,
Tho' to me I confess, they are rather distressing—
For the man of her choice may good fortune await him,
And then—why, I'll try very hard not to hate him.

THE BIRTH-DAY.

TO JAMES BRANKER, ESQ.

EVEN as the wise astronomer invents
 Zones, colures, cycles, in the trackless sky—
 Or as the mariner, whose daring art
 Maps out the undistinguishable main
 With curious lines, that, to the mind untaught,
 Seem all mysterious as a wizard's scheme,
 Or the fine traces in a lady's palm,
 Interpreted by Egypt's wandering brood,—
 So man delights in the wide waste of time,
 The tide of moments ebbing as they flow,
 To set his land-marks ; and recording names.
 Pavilions of the pausing memory,
 Historic pillars, quaintly sculptured o'er
 With hieroglyphics of the heart.

Not least,

In the memorial list of holy times,
 Is that permitted epoch of pure mirth—
 A good man's birth-day—when the very poor
 Pour forth the savings of the stinted meal
 To make one hour rejoice in wealth of joy :—
 Then long of yore, when duty seem'd to frown,
 And love parental wore a brow severe,

And children trembled in their father's eyes,
 The sternest sires were not afraid to smile,
 And doff'd their honest, sage hypocrisy,
 Because the birth-day came but once a year.

And those whom fortune, choice, or chance have cast
 On the wild billows of the changeful world,
 Tho' haply wandering amid Afric sands,
 Or wedg'd in thundering straits of "thick-ribb'd ice,"
 Or lost in the dark city's wilderness,
 Will find their hearts at home, when annual comes
 The merry birth-day,—and recall the hours,
 The vernal hours, when life itself was bliss,
 And every birth-day a new argument
 Of hope and pride.

Alas ! too oft the day
 Remains a hollow cenotaph of Hope,
 When Hope is dead and gone. The worst—
 The worst of hearts, that hath not ceased to feel,
 Grows soft and childish, when the number'd hour
 Records the moment of a mother's pain—
 When the faint mother lifted first her eyes
 To Heaven in thankfulness—then cast them down
 Upon her babe in love.—Oh, gracious Heaven !
 Thy mighty law—in spite of rebel will,
 Spite of all theories of doubting man—
 Still rules triumphant through the tribes of life,
 Confutes the quirks of calculating pride,
 And, o'er the feeblest of all feeble things,
 Sheds the strong potency of love divine :
 For God is stirring in the mother's heart—
 The living God is in her milky breast—

And God's own image, fresh from paradise,
Hallows the helpless form of infancy.

Oh that the God, the same all bounteous Lord
That aids the mother in her agony,
Would save her from the feller pangs, that oft
From love, the sweetest and the holiest love,
Extract all sweetness and all self-esteem,
Making the image of the child beloved
Like a foul phantom, that pollutes the soul,—
A spell, a bondage, a continued fear,
A slow consuming fever of the heart,
In sorrow's gloomy creed, almost a sin.
Fain would the shame-struck parent tear away
The once glad epoch from the calendar,
The birth-day of the graceless prodigal,
Whose name, forbidden, leaves a blank deform'd
In household records, and familiar feasts.
Breeding sharp envy of that parent's lot
Whose tear was dropp'd upon an infant's grave.

Or if the birth-day bring no thought of shame,
It rarely comes without a drop of woe,
That checks the gay laugh with a sudden sigh.
But these are gracious griefs.—For all 'tis good,
Whose taste of goodness is not lost—though sore
May be the thought—to measure back their course
Oft as the birth-day comes.

Wild voyagers,
Launch'd on the perilous sea of human life,
Awhile we paddle by the sunny shores,
The native shores of homely infancy.

Young courage, buoyant on the venturous surge,
 Taunting the prescience of maternal fear,
 Swims light and joyous with the out-bound tide,
 That evermore, at stated hour, comes home,
 And brings a freight of crimson shells, and weeds,
 That mock the things of earth with semblance quaint,
 Imperial cradles of purpureal sheen,
 And wreathed trumpets, curiously convolved,
 Wherein the ocean's mighty harmonies
 Serenely murmur in a humming slumber.

So childhood passes—but the whistling breeze
 Of Time calls shrill, and forth the vessel flies :—
 The mother, wailing on the wave-kiss'd shore,
 Trusts her last counsels to the impatient breeze
 That will not hear them—strains her dewy eyes
 Till the proud sails diminish to a speck—
 That speck to nothing,—questions still the grey
 Unfixt horizon, till the setting sun
 Sinks sudden in the darkness of the waves,
 Then homeward hastening, looks upon the stars,
 And knows that *he* beholds them, who no more
 Shall look with her upon their household flowers.

Where will he go ? To lands of pearl and gold
 In search of gain ? or to the fields of Fame,
 Where the coarse herb, with honourable blood
 Manured and water'd—marl'd with bleaching bones—
 Flags rank and noisome o'er promiscuous graves ?
 Will he, with petty traffic, slow and sure,
 From point to point, along the low flat coast,
 Wakeful and cautious cruise ? or launching forth

On the vast main, spread every glittering sail
 To catch the winds of chance, and bear away
 For frozen continents, or empires dark
 With howling woods, or girt with burning sand ?
 Or will he loiter by the enchanted isles
 Of Love, where oft the languid air becalms
 The willing bark ? or doth he seek in vain
 For that lost land, in elder time submerged
 Beneath the Atlantic wave ?

But hold—no more.—

Too long we dally with a quaint conceit,
 While the swift birth-day wears to jocund night.

Thrice happy they, who rest, ere day declines,
 Beneath the trees they planted in the morn :—
 And thou, my friend, whom honourable toil
 Hath timely raised to honourable wealth,
 And power to diffuse that happiness
 Which thou hast earned—may worthily rejoice,
 Oft as thy annual natal feast arrives, to see
 Thy sire, and hers, whom love to thee hath join'd
 In holy bands, beside thy cheerful board,
 Placidly smiling in their calm old age,
 And blessing Heaven that they can bless the day
 When thou wast born.

TO A POSTHUMOUS INFANT.

CHILD of woman, and of Heaven,
 Ere thy birth, of sire bereaven,
 Offspring of a widow'd dove,
 Of half thy heritage of love
 Defeated, ere thy little breath
 Was drawn from atmosphere of death—
 Smiler, that shalt ne'er beguile,
 Father's tear with baby smile,
 Never laugh on father's knee,
 Knows thy father aught of thee ?

May the spirit of the Blest,
 Look upon its earthly nest ?
 Breathe upon thine infant slumbers,
 The music of angelic numbers,
 Glide into the growing soul,
 To form, “ to kindle, or controul ! ”
 May the sainted parent bless,
 His own, the new-born fatherless !

HOMER.

Far from all measured space, yet clear and plain
 As sun at noon, "a mighty orb of song"
 Illumes extremest Heaven. Beyond the throng
 Of lesser stars, that rise, and wax, and wane,
 The transient rulers of the fickle main,
 One steadfast light gleams through the dark, and long.
 And narrowing aisle of memory. How strong,
 How fortified with all the numerous train
 Of human truths, Great Poet of thy kind,
 Wert thou, whose verse, capacious as the sea.
 And various as the voices of the wind,
 Swell'd with the gladness of the battle's glee—
 And yet could glorify infirmity,
 When Priam wept, or shame-struck Helen pined.

VALENTINE.

TO A FAIR ARTISTE.

Written in 1813.

These, if not the first verses that I ever wrote, are the first with which I succeeded in pleasing even myself:—in fact, the first in which I was able to express a preconceived thought in metre. I have selected them from a mass of juvenile, or more properly, puerile *poetry*, not as any better, or much worse, than the rest, but from the pleasant associations connected with them. It will do nobody any harm, and to some may be an agreeable remembrancer of old times. The young lady to whom it was addressed is the eldest daughter of the late William Green, an artist of great merit, who possessed a true sense of the beautiful in nature. The lady is now a wife and mother, and probably regards the pictorial skill of her youth, and the compliments it may have gained her, as things that have been.

O, MISTRESS of that lovely art
 Which can to shadows form impart—
 'Can fix those evanescent tints,
 Fainter by far than lovers' hints,
 And bring the scenes we love to mind,
 When we have left them far behind,—
 Thou seest an image in thy glass
 Which does e'en Raphael's art surpass,
 But which Dan Cupid has been able
 To copy in my heart's soft table.

How proud 'twould make a connoisseur
To have so beauteous a picture !
For me, I own, it ill contents me
To have a copy, but torments me,
Unless I might possess, as well,
That copy's fair original.

THE FORSAKEN TO THE FAITHLESS.

I do not write to bid thee come unto me—
 I will not pray thee spare my virgin fame :
 Since I am won, 'tis useless now to woo me—
 Undone I am, thou canst not more undo me.
 Boast thy poor triumph o'er an empty name,
 When she that shamed it sleeps in silent death ;
 For what is reputation but a bubble,
 Blown up by Vanity's unthinking breath,—
 A thing which few, with all their toil and trouble,
 Can carry with them to their home, the grave.
 Since men are fire, and we are as the stubble :
 Men's faults are wink'd at—ours, alas ! seen double,
 No pardon of the partial world I crave,
 That still is Folly's mouth-piece, Custom's slave.

Not for my name I mourn—but thou hast ta'en
 A dearer jewel—even my precious soul.
 Nor thou, nor all the world, can give again
 What I have thrown away ! Tho' Time may roll
 His centuries on, when I shall be forgotten,
 Thy falsehood mute, and cold thy fickle lust,—
 When this polluted body shall be rotten,

And, undistinguished, sleep with virgin dust,—
Tho' all may cease, the stars give o'er to shine,
Nor more be witness to that sin of mine,—
Still should I feel my unredeemed loss,
And 'mongst the blessed be a thing unblest ;
No power that is can make me what I was—
Oh, might I then not be ! Oh, vain request !

TO THE MEMORY OF CANNING.

EARLY, but not untimely, Heaven recall'd
 To perfect bliss, thy pure, enlighten'd mind ;
 And tho' the new-born freedom of mankind
 Is sick of fear to be again enthrall'd,
 Since thou art gone ; and this fair island, wall'd
 With the impregnable, unmaster'd sea,
 Mourns with a widow's grief for loss of thee,—
 Should we repine, as if thou wert install'd
 In Heaven too soon ? Nay, I will shed no tear.
 Thy work is done. It was enough for thee
 To own the glorious might of Liberty,
 And cast away the bondage and the fear
 Of rotten custom ; so the hope, which Fate
 Snatch'd from thy life, thy Fame shall consummate.

LIBERTY.

SAY, What is Freedom? What the right of souls,
 Which all who know are bound to keep, or die,
 And who knows not, is dead? In vain ye pry
 In musty archives, or retentive scrolls,
 Charters and statutes, constitutions, rolls,
 And remnants of the old world's history :—
 These shew what has been, not what ought to be,
 Or teach at best how wiser Time controuls
 Man's futile purposes. As vain the search
 Of restless factions, who, in lawless will,
 Fix the foundations of a creedless church—
 A lawless rule—an anarchy of ill.
 But what is Freedom? Rightly understood,
 A universal license to be good.

WHO IS THE POET?

Who is the Poet ? Who the man whose lines
 Live in the souls of men like household words ?
 Whose thought, spontaneous as the song of birds,
 With eldest truth coeval, still combines
 With each day's product, and like morning shines,
 Exempt from age ? 'Tis he, and only he,
 Who knows that Truth is free, and only free,—
 That Virtue, acting in the strict confines
 Of positive law, instructs the infant spirit
 In its best strength, and proves its mere demerit
 Rooted in earth, yet tending to the sky,—
 With patient hope surveys the narrow bound,
 Culls every flower that loves the lowly ground,
 And fraught with sweetness, wings her way on high.

THE USE OF A POET.

A thousand thoughts were stirring in my mind,
That strove in vain to fashion utterance meet,
And each the other cross'd—swift as a fleet
Of April clouds, perplexed by gusts of wind,
That veer, and veer, around, before, behind.
Now History pointed to the custom'd beat,
Now Fancy's clue unravelling, led their feet
Through mazes manifold, and quaintly twined.
So were they straying—so had ever stray'd ;
Had not the wiser poets of the past
The vivid chart of human life display'd,
And taught the laws that regulate the blast,
Wedding wild impulse to calm forms of beauty,
And making peace 'twixt liberty and duty.

YOUNG LOVE.

THE nimble fancy of all beauteous Greece,
 Fabled young Love an everlasting boy,
 That held of nature an eternal lease,
 Of childhood, beauty, innocence, and joy :
 A bow he had, a pretty childish toy,
 That would not terrify his mother's sparrows,
 And 'twas his favourite play to sport his arrows,
 Light as the glances of a wood-nymph coy,
 O happy error ! Musical conceit,
 Of old idolatry, and youthful time !
 Fit emanation of a happy clime,
 Where but to live, to breathe, to be, was sweet.
 And Love, tho' even then a little cheat,
 Dream'd not his craft would e'er be call'd a crime.

DEATH-BED REFLECTIONS
OF MICHELANGELO.

NOT that my hand could make of stubborn stone,
Whate'er of Gods the shaping thought conceives,
Not that my skill by pictur'd lines hath shewn,
All terrors that the guilty soul believes—
Not that my art, by blended light and shade,
Express'd the world as it was newly made,
Not that my verse—profoundest truth could teach,
In the soft accents of the lover's speech ;
Not that I rear'd a temple for mankind,
To meet and pray in, borne by every wind—
Affords me peace—I count my gain but loss,
For that vast love, that hangs upon the Cross.

NOTES.

I.

Dedicatory Sonnet, line 3. "Beside my cradle, &c."

Alluding to the poem called "Frost at Midnight," by S. T. Coleridge. The reference is especially to the following lines:

But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze,
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds
Which image in their bulk both lakes, and shores,
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself,

As far as regards the *habits* of my childhood, these lines, written at Nether Stowey, were almost prophetic. But poets are *not* prophets.

II.

Sonnet 1. "To a Friend."

This sonnet, and the two following, my earliest attempts at that form of versification, were addressed to R. S. Jameson, Esq., on occasion of meeting him in London after a separation of some years. He was the favourite companion of my boyhood, the active friend and sincere counsellor of my youth. "Though seas between us broad ha' roll'd" since we "travell'd side by side" last, I trust the sight of this little volume will give rise to recollections that will make him ten years younger. He is now Judge Advocate at Dominica, and husband of Mrs. Jameson, authoress of the "Diary of an Ennuyee," "Loves of the Poets," and other agreeable productions.

U

III.

Sonnet 1, line 3.

*The peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills.*

Love had he found in huts, where poor men lie,
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The peace that sleeps upon the dewy hills.

Wordsworth's Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle.

IV.

Sonnet 8, line 9.

*The Fays,
That sweetly nestle in the Fox-glove bells.*

Popular fancy has generally conceived a connection between the Fox-glove and the *good people*. In Ireland, where it is called *Lusm-re* (the great herb) and also *Fairy-cap*, the bending of its tall stalks is believed to denote the unseen presence of supernatural beings. The *Shefro*, or gregarious Fairy, is represented as wearing the corolla of the Fox-glove on his head, and no unbecoming head-dress either. See Crofton Croker's "*Fairy Legends of the South of Ireland*," a book to the author of which, unknown as he is to me, I gladly seize this opportunity of returning thanks for huge delight and considerable accession of fairy lore. Crofton Croker is evidently a man of genius and poetical feeling. Is it not to be wished that he had given more free way to the poetry of his nature? He seems almost afraid lest some one should suspect him of fearing and believing in the good people himself, and consequently *tells* his stories as if he did not believe them, which makes them appear more like great big Irish lies than the genuine edicts of superstition. Now this may be proper enough in such tales as Daniel O'Rourke's Voyage to the Moon, Ned Sheehy's Excuse, and some others; but superstition is one thing, and lying another, and though the superstitions are often mendacious, or rather destitute of any standard of truth within their minds, and when hard pushed will consciously and conscientiously force to keep up the credit of their creed, countless are the falsehoods that have been told as well as

believed, for conscience sake,) yet really superstitious persons do not, Falstaff-like, set about of malice propense to raise a laugh by the enormity of their inventions. Many thanks to Crofton for his three delectable little volumes; but I do suspect, that from injudicious emulation of Tam-o-Shanter, he sometimes "mars a curious tale in telling it." It is his manifest endeavour to be as Irish as possible, but are his Irishmen always genuine Milesians? Are they not too much like the Kilmallocks, and Mactwilters, and Brulgrudderies? all excellent fellows in their way, but not fit company for Fairies. A certain dash of the ludicrous is not amiss in a terrible story, because fear is a ridiculous passion, whether its object be man or goblin; but it should be *naïveté*, or unconscious humour, not irony or sarcasm, far less the slang knowingness of a hoaxer.

Of all the imaginations of Erin, the Banshee is the most affecting, and the best authenticated. There are some narratives of this apparition attested by startling evidence. But perhaps the most beautiful fancy is the Thierna-na-Oge, or land of youth, a region of perpetual spring beneath the waters, where there is no decay, no change, no time, but all remains as at the moment of submersion. To this Moore alludes in those lines:—

On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays,
When the clear, cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days,
In the wave beneath him shining.

To return to the Fox-glove. Query. Is not the proper etymology *Folk's*, i. e. *Fairie's-glove*? Surely Renard does not wear gloves in popular tradition.

V.

Sonnet 15, last lines.

*Of nature's inner shrine thou art the priest,
Where most she works when we perceive her least.*

Thou worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee, when we know it not.

Wordsworth's Sonnets.

VI.

*Sonnet 16, line 5.**The patient beauty of the scentless rose.*

The Chinese, or monthly rose, so frequently seen clustering round the cottage-porch, both in the remotest vales and in the immediate outskirts of busy, smoky towns, is almost destitute of scent. The manner in which this cheerful foreigner perseveres in the habits of a warmer climate, through all vicissitudes of ours, is a remarkable instance of vegetable nationality.

VII.

*Sonnet 18, line 5.**The voiceless flowers ———*

In the "Bride's Tragedy," by Thomas Beddoes, of Pembroke College, Oxon, occurs a hypothetical simile which some prose-witted dunce of a reviewer thought proper to assail with great animosity. Something, I forget what, is

Like flower's voices—*if they could but speak.*

Whoever feels the beauty of that line, has a soul for poetry.

VIII.

*Sonnet 19, line 7.**Poor mortality*

*Begins to mourn before it knows its case,
Prophetic in its ignorance.*

Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air
We waule and cry.
When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools.

Shakspeare: King Lear, Act 4.

The thought, which is obvious enough indeed, occurs in an older writer than Shakspeare, and might probably be traced to some of the fathers, or to Seneca. Robert Greene reproaches Shakspeare with reading Seneca *done* into English.

IX.

*Sonnet 19, line 10.**The hospitalities of earth.*

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own.
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And even with something of a mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.—*Wordsworth.*

X.

*Sonnet 20, line 9.**Love-sick ether.*

Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that
 The winds were love-sick with them.

Shakspeare: Antony and Cleopatra, Act 2.

Imitators and alterers do not often improve upon Shakspeare, but when they do, it is but fair to give them credit for it. Dryden, in his "All for Love," has omitted all the philosophy, and two thirds of the poetry of Shakspeare's play, but he has certainly made a much more compact and consecutive drama; and by putting the description of Cleopatra's "grand aquatic procession" into the mouth of Antony himself, has made it a natural and dramatic portion of the play; whereas, in Shakspeare, it has too much the air of a quotation from an epic or descriptive poem. Neither Shakspeare nor Dryden have done *much* more than versify Plutarch's, or rather Dr. Philemon Holland's prose, and they were wise in not hunting after useless originality: but Shakspeare has added some exquisitely poetical touches.

At the helm

A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackles
 Swell with the touches of those *flower soft hands*,
 That yarely frame their office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
 Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast

Her people out upon her; and Antony,
 Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,
 Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
 And left a gap in nature.

If Antony owed to the Egyptian Queen the loss of his empire and life, he is indebted to her for a less hateful renown than would have clung to his name had she never "pursued up his heart on the river of Cydnus." The murderer of Cicero is merged in the lover of Cleopatra.

XI.

Sonnet 20, line 10.

Middle earth.

The phrase occurs in a hymn of the Saxon poet Cædmon, and seems to imply, not the supposed centrality of the earth in the firmament, but the intermediate condition between the poles of good and evil. I have here adapted it to signify, that on earth we only contemplate objects *in transitu*, being unable to trace any process to its origin or its termination.

XII.

Sonnet 31, line 11.

The fell inherency of sin.

This ineradicable taint of sin.

Childe Harold: Canto IV., 126.

XIII.

Sonnet 32.

In this and other translations from the Italian, I have not succeeded in preserving the simple purity of the original diction so completely as I could have wished. Italian words are so beautiful, that they are when "unadorned, adorned the most." English, with all its excellen-

cies, is so deficient in euphony, and so large a part of its vocabulary is debased by association, that it always requires strong or deep pathos, beautiful images, profound thought, rapid and striking interest, or much artifice in composition; something, in short, to withdraw the attention from the coarseness of the vehicle. We cannot emulate the simplicity of the Greeks or the Italians. The poet, indeed, who can and dare, may be austere; but austerity and simplicity are different things. Simplicity is never, austerity is always, conscious of itself. The Sunday habit of a modest country girl is simple—the regulation dress of a nunnery is meant to be austere. Simplicity does not seek what it feels no need of—Austerity rejects what it judges unfit.

But neither simplicity nor austerity are necessarily poetical. The simple must be beautiful, the austere must be great, or they have no place in genuine poetry. A daisy is simple, a turnip still simpler, yet the former belongs to the poetry of Nature, the latter to her most utilitarian prose.

XIV.

Page 37, line 17.

*The humbler spirit
Hears in the daily round of household things,
A low sweet melody, inaudible
To the gross sense of worldlings.*

The still, sad music of humanity.

Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey.

XV.

Page 42, line 5.

The choicest terms are now enfeoff'd to folly.

Enfeoff'd himself to popularity.

Shakspeare, Henry IV. Part 1st.

XVI.

Page 53. Song. " 'Tis sweet," &c.

Among the controversies of the day, not the least important is that respecting the song of the Nightingale. It is debated whether the notes

of this bird are of a joyous or a melancholy expression. He who has spoken so decisively of "the merry Nightingale," must forgive my somewhat unfilial inclination toward the elder and more common opinion. No doubt the sensations of the bird while singing are pleasurable, but the question is, What is the feeling which its song, considered as a succession of sounds produced by an instrument, is calculated to carry to a human listener? When we speak of a pathetic strain of music, we do not mean that either the fiddler or his fiddle are unhappy, but that the tones or intervals of the air are such as the mind associates with tearful sympathies. At the same time, I utterly deny that the voice of philomel expresses present pain. I could never have imagined that the pretty creature "sets her breast against a thorn," and could not have perpetrated the diabolical story of Terens. In fact, nature is very little obliged to the heathen mythology. The constant *anthropomorphism* of the Greek religion sorely perplexed the ancient conceptions of natural beauty. A river is turned into a god, who is still too much of a river to be quite a god. It is a statue of ice in a continual state of liquefaction.

XVII.

Page 56.

Agony of prayer.

I know not who first used this expression, nor at what time it entered into my mind. It occurs where one should hardly expect to find it—in Darwin's *Botanic Garden*; but I had never read the "*Botanic Garden*" at the time that I wrote this epitaph. Doubtless I have read the phrase elsewhere. It could not be of Darwin's invention.

XVIII.

Page 56, last line.

The marriage of pure minds.

Let me not to the marriage of pure minds
Admit impediments.

Shakspeare's Sonnets,

"There is a kind of Nautilus, called by Linnæus Argonauta, whose shell has but one cell; of this animal Pliny affirms, that having exonerated its shell by throwing out the water, it swims upon the surface, extending a web of wonderful tenuity, and bending back two of its arms, and, rowing with the rest, makes a sail, and at length receiving the water, dives again." *Pliny, IX., 29.*

Linnæus adds to his description of this animal, that, like the crab Diogenes or Bernhard, it occupies a house not its own, as it is not connected to its shell, and is therefore foreign to it. Who could have given credit to this if it had not been attested by so many, who have with their own eyes seen this Argonauta in the act of sailing." *Syst. Nat. p. 1161.*

"The Nautilus, properly so named by Linnæus, has a shell consisting of many chambers, of which cups are made in the East with beautiful painting and carving on the mother-pearl. The animal is said to inhabit only the uppermost or open chamber which is larger than the rest, and that the rest remain empty, except that the siphunculus, which communicates from one to the other of them, is filled with an appendage of the animal like a gut or string. Mr. Hook in his *Philos. Exper.* p. 306, imagines this to be a dilatable or compressible tube, like the air-bladders of fish, and that by contracting or permitting it to expand, it renders its shell buoyant or the contrary."—*Darwin.*

It is not to be supposed that the Nautilus defies the storm. It only sails in fair weather and light breezes, and if the sea become turbulent, or any interruption threaten to cut short its voyage of pleasure, it dives directly. I recollect to have seen, in manuscript, a most beautiful copy of verses, founded on this habit of the Nautilus. Had they been in print, mine should never have appeared. The same may be said of the lines "to certain gold fishes." A *real* poet, among many strains of "higher mood," of which he deems the world unworthy, has an exquisite little piece on those beautiful creatures, in which he has exhibited a more than pictorial power of language. It is saying far too little to say, that he makes you *see* the gold-fish—that they flash, in all their effulgence of hue, and complicity of motion, "on that inward eye which is the bliss of solitude." He makes you feel as if you were a gold fish yourself.

It is said, that the gold fish (*Cyprinus Auratus* of Linnaeus) was originally confined to a little lake of China.

XX.

Page 61. *Leonard and Susan.*

This tale, which was first published in Blackwood's Magazine, was intended to form part of a series of narrative and reflective pieces, which should have been intitled "Lucubrations of an Old Bachelor." Leonard was to have been an old man in my, *i. e.* the Old Bachelor's childhood. This, of course, throws the supposed date of the incidents at least a century back, and may obviate the charge of exaggeration which has been alleged against my description of prison sufferings. A debtor's gaol, however, is still, I suspect, pretty much what it always has been—a place of low dissipation or unprincipled luxury for the dishonest; of ruin, and misery, and debasement to the unfortunate.

Blessed be the memory of that benevolent jurist who struggled so manfully against the barbarism of antichristian ordinances! May the softest air of Paradise calm and heal the phrenzy which crossed him in an evil hour; and *if* separated spirits have any perception of what passes in the world they have left, may *his spirit* be comforted in seeing the good work which he well begun, perfected to a good end. Our Judges are very fond of asserting that "Christianity is parcel of the law:" it will be more to the purpose when we can truly say that the law is parcel of christianity.

I wish that future ages—on the very improbable supposition that this trifle should exist in a future age—may think the representation of an election a caricature.

No reflection is meant upon Nabobs in general. "Wherever the carcase is, there will the *cultures* be gathered together." Wherever there is a new way opened to riches, there will be a concourse of those who own no God but Mammon; a Fiend compared to whom Juggernaut is merciful, and Cotytto is pure. But there will also be many who seek wealth as the means of doing good, and many such have returned from the shores of Hindostan. Such characters as my Nabob were probably more common when the East first became the scene of British enterprise than at present. India is now visited by men of better educa-

tion, more refined habits, more philosophic minds; and moreover, the press---Heaven's blessing upon it!--forbids any man to be *very* overtly wicked in any quarter of the globe, who wishes to come back and enjoy his gettings in England.

It is hardly worth while to mention that most of the lugubrious love ditties in this volume were conceived in the character of the love-lorn "*old bachelor*." For what many will deem their silly "mock-platonism," and "querulous egotism," I am only *dramatically* answerable. *I*, does not always mean myself.

XXI.

Page 74.

*The chaste and consecrated snow
On Dian's bosom.*

Thou ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer,
Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
That lies on Dian's lap.

Shakspeare's Timon of Athens.

XXII.

Page 85.

And where the mighty Banian's echoing shade.

The fig tree, not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such as at this time to Indians known,
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
High overarched, with *echoing walls between*.

Paradise Lost, b. 9.

The palace is Aladdin's. It is needless to mention how much my description is indebted to Thalaba. The imagination of Southey is as thoroughly Arabesque as that of Moore's is Persian. Thalaba, Kehama, and Lalla Rookh, have completely orientalized our imaginations.

I love Albums. They sometimes procure a sunny look, or a kind

word, for some hard-favoured son of the muse, that else might wither in the "shade of cold neglect." Surely there is a moral value in whatever enables a poor man to confer a kindness.

XXIII.

Page 100. Farewell.

In these "piping times of peace," undergraduates take the place of Ensigns, and the close of the Long Vacation is attended with the same gales of sighs, and showers of tears, as heretofore the sailing of a regiment for actual service. Examinations are as terrible to the fair as battles, and the future first class-man, or wrangler, is as interesting as the possible hero.

There is something very fascinating about an Undergraduate; he is a rose unblown, and wears "the beauty of promise;" he is a member of an ancient establishment, therefore his youth and freshness are at once contrasted and sanctified by beautiful antiquity; he is a spring flower growing on the steeple of a gothic cathedral. He is enough a man to make his notice worth having by a young lady, and yet so much a boy, that ladies *of a certain age* can make a pet of him. He has the reputation of learning without the odium of displaying it; above all, he has a certificate of gentility, which, let his real rank and fortune be what it will, passes unchallenged everywhere but in his own University. There, indeed, he is under the necessity of proving and maintaining his caste, and the stain of a mercantile or agricultural connection can only be washed out with claret. Everywhere else the "COLLEGIAN" is *absolute sumptus*, a gentleman. But this enviable distinction belongs to Oxford and Cambridge alone. Edinburgh or Glasgow are no recommendation except to phrenological females, and Trinity College, Dublin, is as alien to English associations as Salamanca or Benares. The London University may have its day, but its day is not yet come. At present it is looked upon as coldly by the *petticoat* as by the *gown*. Should a youth be introduced to a fair partner at a country ball as a collegian, and prove, after all, to be only a member of *Stincomalee*, the lady's delicacy would be as much shocked as if she were to find that the very delightful naval officer with whom she had been dancing under the ambiguous title Captain, was the skipper of a small vessel engaged in the Irish butter trade. It is well; the members

of the liberal establishment must *be* gentlemen, if they desire to be accepted as such.

Learning, of itself, confers no rank in England. It does not even give the éclat of a fashionable lion. But, as the passport to learned professions, it enables a man, with good conduct, to overcome any disadvantage of birth, and to achieve a place in the *best* circles of society. Perhaps this is as it should be.

The peculiar advantage of being an Oxonian or a Cantab is specially felt in the vacation, and in the country. In London they form a pleasant variety indeed, but excite no commotion. They are but as a drop of wine in the ocean. In Liverpool, or Manchester, they are out of place. The academical aristocracy is too strong a discord in the commercial concert. In Bath or Cheltenham they degenerate into mere gentlemen loungers; they partake, but they do not create or authorize, the general dissipation. But in small villages, with a *good neighbourhood* and romantic scenery, they are just what they should be. The custom of reading parties is one of the favourable signs of the times. They read very little: if men want to read, let them take a back-room in Cheapside, or the county gaol. At Ambleside, in Wales, in the Isle of Wight, or the Highlands, what have Euclid or Aristotle to do? But they gladden the waters with their music, and the fair with their gallantry; and what is better still, fill their imagination with beautiful images, and their hearts with kind feelings.

It was on a rusticated (not a rusticated) Cantab that these lines were composed. He was a poet in thought, but either "wanted the accomplishment of verse," or which is more probable, concealed his possession of it. Long will his amiable manners, and green-ribboned guitar, be remembered in Grasmere.

XXIV.

Page 119. "*By a Friend.*"

I know not whether I am not taking an unwarrantable liberty in giving publicity to these stanzas; but their appearance in my volume is a pleasant record of a valuable friendship, and I trust my friend will not be displeased to see his pretty and tender effusion along with his old acquaintances of mine, some of which owe their preservation to his kind opinion of their merits.

ERRATA.

Page 42, line 16, for *connateral* read connatural.

Page 44, last line, for *wing* read wings.

Page 68, line 18, for *madning* read madding.

Page 87, line 9, for *face* read fane.

Page 103, line 10, for *leave* read heave.

Page 106, insert notes of interrogation after lines 16 and 18.

Page 120, line 21, for *Oh* read Or.

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